NHMRC Funding Rules 2017

NHMRC Funding Rules for applications submitted in 2017

Incorporating the following:

NHMRC Funding Rules

Scheme specific Funding Rules:

- Boosting Dementia Research Grants
- Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships
- Development Grants
- Centres of Research Excellence
- NHMRC/A*STAR Joint call for research in novel molecular mechanisms of obesity and metabolic diseases in Singapore and Australia scheme-specific Funding Rules
- NHMRC - NIH Brain Collaborative grants scheme-specific funding rules

Table of updates

This document must be read in conjunction with NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017 and Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017.

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NHMRC Funding Rules 2017

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1. Definitions

All terms in the NHMRC Funding Rules and supporting documents have the same meaning as given in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, unless stated otherwise.

2. Introduction

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's largest health and medical research funding body. NHMRC awards grants through several funding schemes to advance health and medical knowledge to improve the health status of all Australians. NHMRC invests in the highest quality research and researchers, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: biomedical, clinical, public health and health services.

The role and functions of NHMRC are set out in the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (the NHMRC Act). The NHMRC Act provides for NHMRC to pursue activities designed to:

- raise the standard of individual and public health throughout Australia
- foster the development of consistent health standards between the various States and Territories
- foster medical research and training and public health research and training throughout Australia
- foster consideration of ethical issues relating to health.

The NHMRC Corporate Plan includes NHMRC’s strategic directions, the major health issues for this period, how NHMRC will deal with these issues and a strategy for medical research and public health research. NHMRC investment of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) is guided by the strategic direction and major health issues outlined in the NHMRC Corporate Plan, and incorporates Targeted Calls for Research and funding of other strategic priorities, on Research Committee’s advice, via NHMRC’s investigator-initiated research funding schemes.

These Funding Rules provide information about the overarching requirements and processes applicable to NHMRC funding schemes, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the scheme-specific funding rules, that set out each scheme’s objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and other scheme-specific information
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review and scheme-specific peer review guidelines, that provide additional information about NHMRC’s peer review processes
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants and scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants, that provides guidance to assist researchers and Administering Institutions with preparing and submitting applications
- the Funding Agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of funding between NHMRC and Administering Institutions.

These Funding Rules and their supporting documents may be amended by NHMRC from time to time. Applicants and grantees should refer to, and must comply with, the latest versions as published on the NHMRC website.

3. Enquiries

For enquiries regarding NHMRC’s funding schemes, researchers are directed to the relevant funding scheme’s web page on the NHMRC website under Apply for funding, or to the RGMS Training Program for guides on navigating the Research Grants Management System (RGMS).

Researchers requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution’s Research Administration Officer (RAO). RAOs can contact the NHMRC’s Research Help Centre (RHC) for further advice.

**NHMRC’s Research Help Centre**

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

E: help@nhmrc.gov.au.
Please refer to the RHC webpage for opening hours or more information.

Applicants must not make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its peer review (such as Grant Review Panel (GRP) members or external peer reviewers). Doing so may constitute a breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007 (the Code) and result in the application being excluded from consideration.

4. Key changes to the NHMRC Funding Rules

Content and formatting requirements have been revised (see Table 1, paragraph 10.3.3).

Removal of Research Support Schemes’ requirements in relation to funding sources and budgets.

Changes made to each scheme’s funding rules are summarised in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

5. Scheme objectives

NHMRC aims to improve the health of Australians by investing in health and medical research. NHMRC does this through several funding programs, the objectives of which vary depending on each scheme’s strategic focus.

Refer to the associated scheme-specific funding rules for further details.

6. Assessment criteria

All applications must address, and are assessed against, assessment criteria. Scheme-specific criteria are set out in the scheme-specific funding rules. The following additional information is applicable to all schemes.

6.1 Recognising Applicants’ Industry-Relevant Expertise

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that knowledge from health and medical research is translated from the research sector to industry, including through commercialisation (e.g. pharmaceutical or medical devices companies) and improvements to health service delivery (e.g. the Australian, State and Territory governments, and providers of health care).

In order to appropriately recognise the value of industry-relevant expertise, industry skills, experience and achievements are considered in assessing applicants’ track records.

This recognises that applicants with experience in sectors other than public sector research (e.g. private industry, government or health care) may have gained highly valuable expertise or produced outputs (e.g. patents or new clinical guidelines) relevant to research translation. This may have limited the applicant’s opportunity to produce more traditional research outputs (e.g. peer reviewed publications).

Further details on how applicants’ track records are assessed are provided in section 4.8 of the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review, and in the relevant scheme-specific peer review guidelines.

6.2 Relative to Opportunity

All applications submitted to NHMRC are assessed “relative to opportunity”. This reflects NHMRC’s policy that assessment processes should accurately assess an applicant’s track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including consideration as to whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant.

Circumstances considered under “relative to opportunity” include:

- amount of time spent as an active researcher
- career disruption (see section 6.2.1. for further details)
- 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 and subsequent 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 upon research productivity
- research outputs and productivity commensurate with time spent employed in other sectors (see section 6.1. for further details) and restrictions on publication associated with time spent working in other sectors (e.g. industry, policy and government)

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including ‘sorry business’ the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question.
Further advice is provided in the Advice and Instructions to Applicants.

6.2.1 Career Disruption

A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an applicant’s capacity to work, due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

Interruptions must involve either a continuous absence from work for periods of 28 calendar days or more and/or a long-term partial return to work that has been formalised with the applicant’s employer.

The period of career disruption may be used:

- to determine an applicant’s eligibility for a scheme
- to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application
- for consideration by the panel during their deliberations.

Further information on how career disruptions are considered under particular schemes is provided in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules, Advice and Instructions to Applicants and Guide to Peer Review.

Circumstances considered under section 6.2 Relative to Opportunity are not career disruptions.

6.3 Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

NHMRC is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encourages applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

As part of NHMRC’s stated commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has established certain requirements and processes designed to ensure that research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is of the highest scientific merit and is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and/or 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 Road Map II: A Strategic Framework for Improving the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People through Research
- Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
- Keeping research on track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics

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 the NHMRC 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 public health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 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 peoples, 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 peoples, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

Panels will consider these in their overall assessment of the application, together with the scheme-specific assessment criteria (refer to the scheme-specific funding rules).

7. Eligibility requirements

Applications for NHMRC funding are subject to the general eligibility requirements set out in these Funding Rules.
7.1 General Requirements

Institutions must be an NHMRC approved Administering Institution to be eligible to receive and administer NHMRC funding - refer to the NHMRC website for a list of approved Administering Institutions.

Chief Investigators A (CIAs), Fellows, Scholars and Administering Institutions must ensure applications meet general and scheme-specific eligibility requirements at the time of submission and for the duration of peer review unless otherwise stated. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be ruled ineligible and may be excluded from further consideration in accordance with Section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules.

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. Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants. Refer to section 11.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for the making of complaints in relation to funding outcomes.

7.2 Multiple Applications/Grants

Limits apply to the number of NHMRC grants that a Chief Investigator (CI) may concurrently hold and/or apply for under certain schemes. These include, but are not limited to, Project Grants, Program Grants and some Targeted, Urgent and International Joint calls for research. Refer to each scheme’s relevant scheme-specific funding rules to see if restrictions apply. Those holding grants and/or awards from other funding agencies should refer to the relevant funding rules and conditions of the grant or award to determine their eligibility to hold a concurrent NHMRC grant.

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

7.3 Excess Salary

Salary support for Specified Personnel must not exceed 100% across all grants held. Grants awarded in the current and previous rounds for all schemes will be considered when determining whether excess salary has been awarded.

Applicants should agree on the management of excess salary with the CIAs/Fellows on all grants if the potential for a Specified Person to be in receipt of excess salary may arise. Applicants, having determined the management strategy in the event of excess salary, should then indicate in their application how excess salary will be managed.

If more than one grant is funded that results in a Specified Personnel being awarded/holding more than 100% salary support, NHMRC will impose a funding condition. The condition may require the CIA/Fellow on the affected grants to agree on, and advise NHMRC, via their RAOs, those grant(s) that will have the salary component of their budgets reduced. Once NHMRC has adjusted the budgets and all conditions have been met, NHMRC will commence payments of the grant.

Refer to scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants for further information.

7.4 People Support Schemes - Scholar or Fellow specific eligibility requirements

Citizenship/Permanent Residency and Fellowship Location Requirements

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant, the Scholarship or Fellowship holder must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia, or a New Zealand citizen with Special Category Visa status. The Scholar or Fellow must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period. Periods of greater than three months overseas require prior approval from NHMRC unless longer periods are allowed in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

Administering Institutions are responsible for certifying and ensuring that these requirements are met. NHMRC may request further information in relation to these requirements, including evidence of residency and/or citizenship.

7.5 Research Support Schemes

Chief Investigators and other Specified Personnel
CIs may undertake research on a part-time basis for all or part of the duration of the grant unless otherwise specified in the scheme-specific funding rules.

The maximum number of CIs allowed on an application varies between schemes - refer to the relevant scheme-specific funding rules for details.

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs in exceptional circumstances where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. In these cases, applicants may claim a Personal Support Package (PSP) 1 at 50% for PhD students named as CIs.

CIs are expected to remain active on the Research Activity as outlined in the application for the duration of the grant.

**Chief Investigator ‘A’**

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant, unless otherwise specified in scheme-specific funding rules, the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, a permanent resident of Australia or have an appropriate work visa in place. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.

**Salary Support for Chief Investigators**

NHMRC Research Support awards are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs and in some schemes (e.g. Program Grants) salary support for CIs is not offered. However, if applicants are seeking CI salaries, justification on how the proposed budget is directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research must be provided and will be considered during peer review.

With the exception of Program Grants, Partnership Projects and some Targeted Calls for Research (TCR):

- CIs, including the CIA, may seek a salary if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period, as stated above.
- CIs based overseas are not normally able to draw a salary from a grant unless stated otherwise in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

Requested salaries must be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). Refer to section 8.3 for further information.

NHMRC does not support senior researcher salaries through Research Support schemes. Researchers seeking salaries outside the range of PSP one to five must do so via NHMRC’s People Support schemes (e.g. NHMRC Scholarships and Fellowships). Further information about these schemes is available on the NHMRC website.

**Consent to be a Chief Investigator**

The CIA must confirm in writing with all other CIs that they agree to be named as such on the application and endorse the application. The CIA must provide written evidence of this to the RAO.

The RAO must not certify and submit the application to NHMRC until the CIA has completed this step and all relevant CI consents and endorsements have been obtained.

**Associate Investigators**

An Associate Investigator (AI) is defined as an investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on publications.

Individuals are not able to draw a salary from any NHMRC grants on which they are a named AI.

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 applies unless otherwise stated in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

The CIA must confirm in writing with all AIs that they agree to be named on the application. Written evidence must be obtained from all AIs and provided to the RAO, stating their agreement to be on the application. AIs are not required to endorse an application prior to submission to NHMRC.

8. Funding

NHMRC funding is provided by the Australian Government and administered in accordance with the Funding Agreement. Funding is provided to the Administering Institution, which is responsible for the administration of the grant.

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

NHMRC’s Research Committee (RC) annually reviews and recommends an indicative budget to be awarded across Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) funding schemes. Funding recommendations for individual schemes are considered by RC on completion of grant review processes throughout the year.
Limits on the level and duration of funding for individual grants are outlined in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules. Duration of five years is common for many NHMRC funding schemes, to allow for greater career certainty and in recognition that high quality research is becoming increasingly complex to perform. Where no fixed level or duration is specified, the requested funding and duration must be justified in the application.

For Research Support schemes, GRPs generally recommend a budget and duration for each application based on the budgets requested by applicants, the requirements of each proposal as assessed by the GRPs, their knowledge of the costs associated with the research, any limits specified in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules, and value for money considerations.

Budgets may be reduced where the GRP considers that all aims and objectives can be achieved with the recommended funds. A reduced budget does not reduce the scope of the proposed research activity.

Budgets may also, or alternatively, be assessed by senior NHMRC scientists with a research background, such as where peer review is conducted by a funding partner. In all cases, NHMRC reserves the right to recommend funding levels which are less than those requested in the application, and a duration of funding which differs from that requested.

For People Support schemes, funding level and duration are fixed according to the type of award, as set out in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

8.2 Duplicate Funding

NHMRC may compare the research proposed in grant applications with grants previously funded, currently funded, and funded by other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council (ARC), and published research (refer to section 7.2.). NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being undertaken.

As stated in the NHMRC’s Privacy Policy, 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. This includes liaising with other funding agencies (such as the ARC) to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding.

8.3 Use of Funds

8.3.1 Budget Items for People Support Schemes

Applicants do not need to complete a budget because salary contributions for Fellows and Scholars are provided at fixed rates. NHMRC funding under Fellowships and Scholarships may only be expended for the purposes provided for in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules.

8.3.2 Budget Items for Research Support Schemes

NHMRC funding under Research Support Schemes may only be expended on Direct Research Costs (DRCs) as described in the NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines. For further information see the Direct Research Costs page on the NHMRC website.

Applicants must provide the total value of requested items on a yearly basis and justify all budget items, paying particular attention to any requests which may be atypical for the particular field of research. Where applicable, applicants should also note and must comply with the following additional information and requirements:

Salaries:

Salary contributions for research staff are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs).

Only eligible personnel may apply for a PSP. Refer to section 7 for further details.

The level of PSP requested in an application must match the roles and responsibilities of the position, not the expertise of a specific person whom the CIs intend to appoint to the position.

Annual indexation may be applied to PSPs, based on the Australian Government Wage Cost Index (WCI).

Further information about PSP amounts can be found on the Budget Mechanisms for NHMRC Research Funding page of the NHMRC website under Apply for funding.

Collection, processing, storage and distribution of biospecimens and associated data that are a direct requirement of the research project:

Biospecimen and associated data costs must be based upon published cost recovery schedules of biobanks or similar accredited bodies (e.g. Pathology services).

Given the significant expansion in biobank activities in Australia in the last decade, any new proposal for prospective funding of a biobank must specify why the samples cannot already be sourced from an existing biobank. Any proposal to establish a new biospecimen collection should seek to use infrastructure or services provided by biobanks or similar accredited bodies.

Comprehensive justification for not using one of these must be provided.

Using the services of other research facilities:

Researchers should consult with research facilities to ensure that the services for which they are seeking DRC funding can be provided and that the research budgets reflect these charges. Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration must be
included with the application.

Items of equipment unique to the project and essential for the project to proceed:
Applicants must clearly outline the total value of all items of equipment for each year, why the equipment is required for the proposed research and why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution.
For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the RAO of the Administering Institution, to be available to NHMRC on request.
The Administering Institution must be prepared to meet all service and repair costs in relation to equipment funded.
Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where these are an integral component of a piece of laboratory equipment or are of a nature essential for work in the research field. For example: a computer which is dedicated to data collection from a mass spectrometer, or used for the manipulation of extensively large datasets (i.e. requiring special hardware).
Individual items of equipment costing less than $10,000 must be requested as DRCs.
Funding is not available for equipment totalling more than $80,000. Annual indexation is applied to equipment, based on the Wage Cost Index (WCI).

GRPs will review proposed budgets and may recommend budgets less than those requested, as set out in section 8.1.

8.4 Tax Implications
All amounts referred to in the NHMRC Funding Rules and relevant scheme-specific funding rules are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.
Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving funds.

9. Researcher responsibilities and considerations

9.1 Responsible Conduct of Research
NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Institutions that administer grants, as well as the Specified Personnel, are bound by the conditions of the Funding Agreement. NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code).

9.2 Incomplete, False or Misleading Information
All information submitted to NHMRC must be complete, current and accurate at the time of submission.
Administering Institutions are required to notify NHMRC of research misconduct matters, in accordance with the Funding Agreement and the NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding.

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.
Examples of false or misleading information in an application include, but are not limited to:

- providing a dishonest statement regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought
- providing incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding
- providing fictitious track records
- falsifying claims in publication records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

If NHMRC believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional, it may refer the matter for appropriate investigation and take action under these Funding Rules and the Funding Agreement or in accordance with the NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding.

9.3 Dissemination of Scientific Results (Open Access, Data Sharing and Intellectual Property)
The Australian Government makes a major investment in research to improve the wellbeing of our society. To maximise the benefits flowing from research, and to allow access by other researchers and the wider community, publications resulting from research activities must be disseminated as broadly as possible. NHMRC acknowledges that researchers take into account a wide range of factors in determining the best avenues for dissemination of findings and/or publications arising from their research.

Funding recipients must ensure that they comply with NHMRC policy on the dissemination of research findings, which is available on the NHMRC website under Dissemination of Research Findings.
9.4 Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research

The Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research (the Statement) has been developed because many consumers and researchers recognise the contribution that consumers can make to health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd (CHF) 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, noting that section 1.13 of the Code states ‘Appropriate consumer involvement in research should be encouraged and facilitated by research institutions and researchers’.

9.5 Privacy and disclosure of Personal information

NHMRC is committed to protecting applicants’ and grantees’ privacy in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). The Australian Privacy Principles set out how Australian Government agencies should collect, use, store and disclose personal information and how individuals can access records containing their personal information.

For some funding schemes, NHMRC may disclose your personal information to an overseas-based co-funding organisation. NHMRC may also appoint peer reviewers from overseas countries, where there is a need, and in accordance with the Privacy Act and the NHMRC’s Privacy Policy. RGMS will prompt you with a notice that seeks your consent to overseas disclosures.

9.6 Confidentiality

Section 80 of the NHMRC Act makes it an offence for NHMRC Officers (which includes members of NHMRC Council and committees) to disclose confidential commercial information acquired in the course of their duties and relating to matters under consideration by NHMRC, unless the disclosure is made in the performance of duties under the NHMRC Act.

NHMRC will not be taken to have breached its obligations to the extent that it discloses confidential commercial information for a purpose directly related to the enforcement or investigation of a possible breach of any Commonwealth, State, Territory or local law.

Information which may properly be regarded as confidential commercial information should be identified as such by applicants.

9.7 Freedom of Information

NHMRC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the FOI Act) and is committed to meeting the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability requirements.

Researchers should familiarise themselves with NHMRC’s Freedom of Information procedures before submitting an application.

10. Submitting an application

10.1 Opening and Closing Dates

Application opening and closing dates vary between NHMRC funding schemes and may include interim deadlines (e.g. minimum data submission deadlines). Indicative dates are generally advertised well in advance on the NHMRC website under NHMRC Funding Calendar. Confirmed dates and associated deadlines are published in scheme-specific funding rules once the application period opens.

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure they are aware of all relevant dates (including any NHMRC interim deadlines and internal submission dates imposed by institutions), closing times, whether daylight saving applies and any time zone differences. Applications will not be accepted if:

- they are submitted after the specified closing date and time;
- they fail to meet any interim deadlines.

Any changes to dates will be notified via the RAO of Administering Institutions and published in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules and on the NHMRC website.

Once submitted to NHMRC as outlined in section 10.4, the application is considered final and no changes may be made (see section 10.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

10.2 Submission Method

Applications must be submitted electronically using NHMRC’s online Research Grants Management System (RGMS) unless otherwise advised by NHMRC.
Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and all Specified Personnel on an application to register for an RGMS account. Applicants who are not registered in RGMS can submit a new user request via the RGMS login page. Refer to the RGMS Training Program for detailed user instructions, or contact your RAO or the NHMRC Research Help Centre for further assistance.

10.3 Content and Format Requirements

Applicants must complete and submit the following information in RGMS:

- all mandatory sections of the RGMS Profile
- all sections of the RGMS Curriculum Vitae (CV) required by the relevant scheme
- all parts of the application form
- any other supporting documents required by the relevant scheme (e.g., grant proposal, referee reports, letters of support from policy/practice/funding partners, etc).

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

- 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).
- publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, and the previous Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Ranked Journal List, consistent with the recommendations from the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

More information on this can be found in the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be excluded from consideration.

Additional requirements and guidance in relation to each component of the application are provided below and in the Advice and Instructions to Applicants.

10.3.1 Profile and CV

Profile and CV information must be provided for all Specified Personnel named on an application. It is the responsibility of all Specified Personnel to enter and maintain the information in their RGMS Profile and CV. This information is used to contact applicants, assess applications and identify peer reviewers. The CV is also used to capture grant outcomes in the form of publications.

All Specified Personnel must have entered their Profile and CV information in RGMS before CIA, Scholar or Fellow certification. An earlier deadline may apply to the entry of some Profile and CV data (e.g., if a minimum data date applies). This will be stated in the relevant scheme-specific funding rules where this is the case.

Mandatory Profile information is indicated by a red asterisk in RGMS.

CV requirements vary between schemes and are specified in the Advice and Instructions to Applicants.

10.3.2 Application Form

The CIA, Scholar or Fellow must complete all parts of the application form, in English, prior to submission. An earlier minimum data date may apply to the completion of some parts of the application form. Scheme-specific funding rules will identify if this applies.

Application requirements vary between schemes. Refer to the Advice and Instructions to Applicants for further details.

10.3.3 Grant Proposal

In addition to the application form, a written Grant Proposal must be submitted in English. Applications must be submitted in a PDF file, using the NHMRC’s Grant Proposal template available on each scheme’s respective webpage. Applicants must use this template to complete their Grant Proposal. The Grant Proposal must then be uploaded into RGMS.

Details to be addressed in the Grant Proposal and associated page limits are set out in the scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants. Applicants must note that assessors will, as part of their assessment, consider the reproducibility and applicability of the proposed research and research design. Within the experimental design of the proposal, applicants should include sufficient information to demonstrate that robust and unbiased results will be produced. For further detail, refer to the Grant Proposal table in the scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants.

Naming and formatting requirements for the Grant Proposal are listed in the table below.
Conformance with page limits and formatting requirements is strictly enforced. Applications that fail to comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File format</td>
<td>The Grant Proposal must be saved and uploaded as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File size</td>
<td>The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2Mb in size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File name</td>
<td>The PDF file must be named using the following: APP ID_Applicant’s Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf e.g. APP1234567_Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page size</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page limits</td>
<td>Page limits vary between schemes and parts of the document. Refer to the relevant scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants for applicable page limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Header</td>
<td>Application ID and Applicant surname must be included in the header. Document title (e.g. Grant Proposal – 2014 Second Call Partnership Projects) must be included header.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footer</td>
<td>Page number must be included in the footer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Font</td>
<td>NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12 point Times New Roman font. Applicants must ensure the font is readable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line spacing</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[1] If the assessor cannot read the application due to inconsistency with any of the above formatting requirements, or a combination of any of them, the assessor is not compelled to consider the improperly completed section in their assessment or complete the assessment of the application, on the grounds that the application does not comply with the formatting requirements. Where an assessor cannot complete an assessment because the formatting renders the grant proposal unreadable and therefore does not submit an assessment, such applications will not be excused from the NFFC process because they do not meet the minimum assessments requirement as per the NFFC business rules.

10.4 Certification and Submission

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

Certification is required firstly by the CIA, Fellow or Scholar and then by the Administering Institution.

10.4.1 CIA, Fellow or Scholar Certification

The CIA, Fellow or Scholar must also provide the RAO with evidence that the application is complete and that all CIs have agreed to it (i.e. through written evidence such as email). Such written evidence should be retained by the Administering Institution and must be provided to the NHMRC on request.

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA, Fellow or Scholar 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 of the Ethical Conduct of 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.
- All Specified Personnel have 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.
- All Chief Investigators have 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 in accordance with section 10.7 of the
NHMRC Funding Rules.

And if funded,

the research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time of award
the research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.

10.4.2 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 detailed in the relevant Funding Rules and Advice and Instructions to Applicants.
Where the CIA, Fellow or Scholar is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant and will remain in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
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 in relation to 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.
Written evidence of consent has been obtained from all CIs and AIs and provided to the RAO.

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

Once an application has been submitted and the scheme application period has closed, the application is considered final and no changes may be made.

10.5 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 appropriate explanation regarding 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, they should make their reasons clear by immediately advising the NHMRC in writing to the Research Help Centre at help@nhmrc.gov.au.

10.6 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 the 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.

10.7 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 NHMRC Funding Rules, scheme-specific funding rules or Advice and Instructions to Applicants
it, or persons named on the application, contravene an applicable law or code
it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the MREA (refer to sections 3 and 51 of the NHMRC Act)
persons named on the application are the subject of a decision by the Chief Executive Officer 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 meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect action taken by NHMRC in response to research misconduct allegations or findings, or a Probity Event. See the NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding.

Examples include, but are not limited to:
The application is not certified and submitted via RGMS through the RAO of an NHMRC approved Administering Institution by the advertised closing date and time.
The proposed research duplicates research previously or currently being undertaken.
The application fails to accurately declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the particular area of the application.
The application includes any incomplete, false or misleading information.
The CEO or delegate has made a decision under the relevant NHMRC policy to exclude the applicant from consideration in response to research misconduct allegations or findings or a Probity Event.

This is to ensure a level playing field for all applicants and to uphold the integrity of NHMRC funded research. Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA, Fellow, Scholar and Administering Institution certification.

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 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 the Commissioner of Complaints (refer to the NHMRC website for further information on the Commissioner of Complaints).

11. Assessment process

The assessment of applications against assessment criteria (refer to section 6) may be undertaken jointly with partners and/or with input from independent assessors, depending on the funding scheme.

An overview of the assessment process is provided in the following sections. Refer to the relevant scheme-specific funding rules and peer review guidelines for further detail.

11.1 Initial Processing of Applications

NHMRC staff check that applications are eligible according to both the general and relevant scheme-specific eligibility rules. Conformance with other application requirements is also checked during the course of peer review. If an application is found to be ineligible or in breach of an application requirement, NHMRC will advise the Administering Institution’s RAO in writing and the application will be excluded from further consideration (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

11.2 Peer Review and Value for Commonwealth Money

High quality, rigorous peer review is a fundamental tenet of NHMRC’s assessment process. NHMRC peer review adheres to NHMRC’s Principles of Peer Review and is conducted in accordance with the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review.

All applications are assessed for scientific merit against assessment criteria using robust, impartial and independent peer review processes. In addition, for Research Support schemes, proposed budgets are reviewed based on the requirements of each application and the peer reviewers’ (or senior NHMRC scientists’) knowledge of the associated costs.

These processes ensure that only the highest quality, most relevant and most competitive (effective, efficient and economical) research is recommended for funding and, together with conditions for ethical review, maximise value for Commonwealth money.

Steps in the peer review process vary between schemes. These are described in detail in each scheme’s Peer Review Guidelines.

11.3 Disclosures and Conflicts of Interests

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that interests of any kind are dealt with consistently and transparently in accordance with section 42A of the NHMRC Act and sections 16A and 16B of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

NHMRC has procedures in place for managing the interests of peer reviewers, members of NHMRC committees and NHMRC staff. These can be found in NHMRC Declaration of Interests and Conflict of Interest Policy. Further information on what constitutes an interest including Conflicts of Interests (COIs) and how NHMRC manages these can be found in the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review.

11.4 Decision-Making

Once applications have been peer-reviewed, NHMRC seeks advice from its Research Committee and Council on funding recommendations for MREA funding schemes. Neither Council nor Research Committee changes the category or scores given to individual grants by the GRPs, nor are they given information that would enable identification of individual applications. Research Committee determines the total number and value of applications that it considers appropriate to recommend for funding, taking into consideration the available budget and strategic priorities. Council then considers Research Committee’s recommendations and advises the NHMRC’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, the CEO then makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC.

11.5 Objections to Assessor Reports

Applicants may object to assessor comments and seek an NHMRC ruling. These objections will be assessed relative to the guidance provided in section 5.1 of the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review.

Applicants should state their objection/s in writing to the NHMRC through the Administering Institution’s RAO. Objections must be received within five calendar days of comments being issued and should state how the comments do not meet NHMRC standards set out in section 5.1 of the guide to NHMRC Peer Review. Unless NHMRC advises otherwise, applicants should continue with the preparation of a rebuttal.

Objections should be directed to the scheme director via an email to the Research Help Centre at help@nhmrc.gov.au.

NHMRC will provide a written response to all objections.

Following receipt of the NHMRC scheme director’s response, applicants may choose to seek a further review by the Complaints Team (see section 11.7 of these Funding Rules).

11.6 Notification of Outcomes

NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution’s RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible. This will typically follow the announcement of funding by the portfolio Minister or his/her representative, but may be sooner if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons (see section 10.7 of these Funding Rules).

NHMRC may advise applicants of the outcomes under embargo.

Feedback will generally be provided to applicants, except where peer review is conducted by a funding partner or the application is deemed Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) or non-competitive. This feedback will typically comprise an overall score for the application and depending on the nature of the funding scheme, may also include a score against each assessment criterion and/or additional report. Following the announcement of outcomes, applicants will receive their feedback report attached to their outcome letter.

CIAs, Fellows and Scholars whose applications are approved, 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. In addition, the Administering Institution will have access, through RGMS, to the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online acceptance process within RGMS.

Once outcomes are publicly announced, NHMRC will publish the following information on its website for all awarded grants, including Fellowships:

- Application identity number (ID)
- Chief Investigator (CI) name/s
- Administering Institution
- Scientific title
- Broad Research Area
- Funding partners (if relevant)
- Total funding awarded and duration.

NHMRC may publish this information in a manner that allows it to be searched and viewed in a variety of ways, including by CI name, state, institution and/or application ID.

The plain English summary may also be published.

The CEO or delegate may withdraw or vary an offer of a grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue. See NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding, as amended from time to time.

11.7 Complaints in Relation to Funding Outcomes

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

Applicants who wish to object to assessor comments should refer to section 11.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules.

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

The NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints.
12. Grant administration

12.1 Information required from Awardees

Awardees may be required to supply additional information about their Research Activity before payments commence. This will be stated in each scheme’s relevant scheme-specific funding rules and letter of offer.

12.2 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. This applies to both Research Support and People Support schemes.

For further information see the Administering Grants section of the NHMRC website.

12.3 NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with the conditions specified in Schedules), which is an agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. In accepting the Schedules, the Administering Institution is agreeing to the conditions contained in the Funding Agreement and the Schedule.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found on the NHMRC website under Administering Grants. A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution is in place
- the appropriate Schedule to the Funding Agreement is accepted by the Responsible Officer, or their delegate, and is accepted and executed by NHMRC.

12.4 Payments

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

12.5 Variations

Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements, unless allowed for in the scheme-specific funding rules.

For information on grant variation eligibility requirements, see the scheme-specific funding rules and NHMRC’s Variations Policy.

12.6 Suspensions of Award

NHMRC funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to requests made by the CIA/Fellow.

The CEO or delegate may suspend funding when it is reasonable to consider there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, on the basis of a Probity Event, or an investigation of alleged research misconduct, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

Refer to the relevant scheme-specific funding rules for information regarding particular schemes.

12.7 Reporting

Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

12.7.1 Financial Reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant, a financial acquittal is also required. Refer to the NHMRC website for details of format and timing.

12.7.2 Non-Financial Reports

The Funding Agreement requires the Specified Person (CIA for Research Support schemes or Fellow) to prepare reports for each Research
Activity. It is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met prior to time of award. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on the NHMRC website under Administering Grants. Additional obligations may apply to some schemes – refer to the relevant scheme-specific funding rules for details.

NHMRC has designated the Research Achievements Summary in the Final Report as information that NHMRC may publicly release. Use of this information may include publication on the NHMRC 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, funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

12.8 Evaluation

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

The NHMRC also facilitates public access to NHMRC-funded research outcomes through its policy on the dissemination of research findings (see section 9.3). This policy ensures that peer-reviewed journal publications arising from NHMRC grants, with the exception of scholarships, are freely available to the public, including for the purpose of evaluation.

12.8.1 NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

Grantees undertaking research related to dementia must contribute their expertise to the NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR), which is responsible for strategically expanding, coordinating and translating the national dementia research effort. The NNIDR will draw 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.

Further information on the Institute and related developments can be found on the NHMRC website.

13. Applicable laws and obligations

For a list of Applicable Laws and Obligations, see the NHMRC website.

14. Resources

14.1 NHMRC Resources

A Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017
NHMRC Guideline Development and Conflicts of Interest
About the NHMRC
Access to the Research Grants Management System (RGMS)
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007
Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th edition 2013
Grantee Variations Policy
Keeping research on track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics
NHMRC Administering Institutions policy
NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
NHMRC’s Freedom of Information Policy
NHMRC Funding Agreement
Commissioner of Complaints
NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding
NHMRC Policy on the Dissemination of Research Findings
NHMRC’s Privacy Policy
NHMRC Corporate Plan
Principles-based Direct Research Cost Guidelines
The NHMRC Road Map II: A Strategic Framework for Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health through Research
Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
14.2 Legislation

Criminal Code Act 1995
Freedom of Information Act 1982
Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act 2013)
National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act)
Privacy Act 1988
Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction Act 2002 (PHCR Act)
Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002 (RIHE Act)

NHMRC - National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) collaborative research grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2017

The following sections provide additional information about the NHMRC - NIHR Collaborative Research Grants scheme (NHMRC-NIHR Scheme) including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description and Objectives

The NHMRC-NIHR Scheme supports Australian participation and collaboration in leading international collaborative research through the United Kingdom's NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme. The HTA Programme funds independent research about the effectiveness, costs and broader impact of healthcare treatments and tests.

The specific objective is to fund research in the topic area Prophylactic antibiotics to prevent recurrent lower respiratory tract infections in children with neurological impairment.

Further information on the NIHR-HTA Programme is available from the following National Institute for Health Research website.

Participation in the HTA Programme allows Australian researchers to engage with world leading researchers on projects of the highest calibre and assists Australian health and medical research to maintain a standard of excellence.

1.2 Who should apply?

NHMRC funding under this scheme is for high quality research that has been deemed fundable based on scientific peer review by the NIHR and meets the eligibility criteria of the scheme.

Australian researchers who are listed on an NIHR expression of interest, who have been invited to submit a full application in the topic area Prophylactic antibiotics to prevent recurrent lower respiratory tract infections in children with neurological impairment should apply.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the NHMRC-NIHR scheme-specific Funding Rules for 2017:

Section 5 outlines the NHMRC-NIHR Scheme topic area that is eligible.

3. Critical dates
February 2017*  
Scheme documentation available

1 March 2017  
Applications open in RGMS

5 April 2017  
Applications close in RGMS

March – June 2017  
NIHR conducts peer review and advises NHMRC of funding outcomes

June – August 2017  
NHMRC approval process

September 2017*  
NHMRC outcomes available

* Dates are indicative and subject to change

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5.00 pm AEST on the specified closing date. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

4. Assessment criteria

The following will be assessed as described in section 7.2:

a. Eligibility (section 5)
b. Budget (section 6)
c. Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, if relevant (section 4.1).

4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Applications

All applications that relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health must also address, and will be assessed against, the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

At least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health for an application to be considered as addressing this priority area. Where this is deemed not the case, applications will be assessed as a standard NHMRC-NIHR Scheme application.

5. Eligibility

The NHMRC-NIHR Scheme has eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

The Chief Investigator (CIA) and their Administering Institution must be named as the Australian Partner Investigator on an application submitted in response to Prophylactic antibiotics to prevent recurrent lower respiratory tract infections in children with neurological impairment. The application must have been shortlisted based on scientific peer review by NIHR in order to submit an application to NHMRC. Other Australian researchers listed on the NIHR application must be identified as CIs in the application to NHMRC. Australian applicants must provide the Australian budget details on the NHMRC-NIHR Scheme application form (in RGMS).

The Australian applicants must be successful through the NIHR HTA process to be eligible to receive funding from NHMRC.

Holding an NHMRC–NIHR Scheme Grant does not affect a CI’s ability to hold other NHMRC Grants.

6. Funding

NHMRC has allocated a total of $3 million to the NHMRC-NIHR Scheme. Successful grants may be up to five years in duration but the period and associated budget must be well justified within the application. All funding requests, including duration of funding, must be identical to those sought in the original application peer reviewed by NIHR. Funding is at the discretion of the NHMRC.

The internal budget process will consider how the requested budget and requested duration of the grant supports the proposed outcomes of the application. NHMRC Senior Scientists review budgets and may make adjustments where the budget item is not well justified.

For a more detailed explanation on the appropriate use of NHMRC funds and how to prepare the budget in the application, refer to section 2.4 of...
the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017.

Australian based research will be funded by the NHMRC, and the UK based research will be funded by the NIHR HTA Programme.

7. Selection process

7.1 NIHR Review

The NIHR-HTA conducts an extensive and robust scientific peer review process for all NHMRC-NIHR Scheme applications. Applications that are considered fundable by the NIHR-HTA will be considered for funding by both NIHR (for United Kingdom based research and researchers only) and NHMRC (for Australian based research and researchers only). Note: An application will not be funded in just one country.

Applicants must be shortlisted by the NIHR’s scientific peer review process to apply to NHMRC. Applicants are required to outline the benefit of the research to Australia in their NHMRC application.

For further details of the NIHR-HTA peer review process please visit the NIHR website.

7.2 NHMRC Review

Applicants who are shortlisted by the NIHR scientific peer review process will be invited to submit an application to NHMRC for funding to support the Australian-based component of the research. The applicant must provide the full application submitted to NIHR as an attachment to the NHMRC application. A detailed outline of the complete peer review process is provided at Attachment A.

The NHMRC will examine each application against the eligibility criteria and scrutinise the Australian budget requests. Where the application includes research related to the health of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples it will also be assessed against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria as per section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 to ensure that the application is appropriate for and of benefit to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. If necessary, conditions of funding may be placed to ensure applications meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria. All assessment steps for the Australian review are performed by the Office of the NHMRC.

The NHMRC will seek advice from its Research Committee and Council on the total number of grants to be awarded. The CEO then formally seeks approval from the Minister with portfolio responsibility for the NHMRC to expend public money from the Medical Research Endowment Account.

8. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes applicable to all NHMRC awardees can be found in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

8.1 Reporting

The NHMRC reporting requirements are as outlined in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Additional to these requirements, applicants should be aware that Grantees are also required to ensure they comply with section 12.8 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. NHMRC has no additional reporting requirements for this funding scheme. However, the NIHR may impose additional reporting requirements or conditions specific to the research that may impact on the Australian component of the research. Please refer to the NIHR-HTA Programme website for more information.

9. Attachment

Attachment A - Application and Assessment Process (PDF, 257KB)

NHMRC/A*STAR Joint call for research in novel molecular mechanisms of obesity and metabolic diseases in Singapore and Australia scheme-specific Funding Rules

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)/Agency for Science,
Technology and Research (A*STAR) Joint Call for Research in Novel Molecular Mechanisms of Obesity and Metabolic Diseases in Singapore and Australia (NHMRC/A*STAR Joint Call for Research) including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines
- NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017, incorporating the scheme-specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants
- NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific funding rules.

Applicants should be aware of the relevant A*STAR requirements for this call, as highlighted where necessary throughout this document.

Note: Singaporean applicants wishing to make contact with NHMRC must do so via their Australian Chief Investigator A (CIA) and relevant Research Administration Officer (RAO) in the first instance.

1. About the call

1.1 Background

In September 2011, NHMRC signed an agreement with A*STAR to promote and encourage research and development activities amongst researchers from Singapore and Australia. This agreement was renewed in 2014 to continue the collaborative relationship.

Under this agreement, collaborations are facilitated through convening a joint symposium and joint international calls for research. In March 2015, the second joint NHMRC/A*STAR symposium focussing on novel molecular mechanisms of obesity and metabolic diseases was held to stimulate new ways of thinking to find solutions to this global health issue.

The symposium provided a platform for researchers from both countries to share their latest research and aid collaboration. Symposium attendees gained insights into new and emerging science behind the human biology of obesity under four key themes: genetics, epigenetics, neurology and microbiomes.

Following on from the workshop, this call has been developed jointly by NHMRC and A*STAR.

1.2 Objectives

This joint call is for research into novel molecular mechanisms of obesity and metabolic diseases.

The specific objectives of the joint call are to:

- generate new knowledge that will lead to novel approaches to manage metabolic diseases and obesity to translate into policy and practice
- foster co-investment with international partners in research programs of joint interest that will involve researchers based in Singapore and Australia
- increase the level of scientific skills and technological capabilities between Singapore and Australia
- build further collaborations between Singapore and Australian researchers.

This call for research grant applications should focus on molecular mechanisms of metabolic diseases characterised by high blood pressure, insulin resistance, high cholesterol or unhealthy weight gain/retention related to obesity including, but not limited to, genetics, epigenetics, genomics, neurobiology and microbiomes. This might include research to identify new biomarkers or new intervention targets.

This call will not fund research applications in the broad research area of public health, health services or health promotion and/or applications focussed primarily on:

- dietary interventions or research focused on nutritional science
- cancer
- cohort studies.

2. Critical dates
Applications open in NHMRC’s Research Grants Management System (RGMS)

Minimum data due in RGMS

Applications close in RGMS

Approximate rebuttal period for applicants'

Grant Review Panel (GRP) Meeting

Funding Announcement

Application outcomes are announced when peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to section 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

Minimum data must be entered into RGMS by 2.00 pm Singapore Time (SGT)/5.00 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC and A*STAR to start sourcing suitable panel members. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for the NHMRC/A*STAR Joint Call for Research consists of the following:

General (all sections)
A-RC Research Classification (all sections)
A-RT Research Team – including the lead Singapore CIB name and other team members if known [note: team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of applications at 5pm on 22 March 2017 Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT)].

Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data; applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and section 6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 2.00 pm Singapore Time (SGT)/5.00 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Note: As this call is for international collaborations and will be assessed by a joint Australian and Singapore Grant Review Panel (GRP), applicants must provide consent to NHMRC to share application information with international assessors.

3. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

1. Scientific quality of the project including feasibility (25%)
2. Significance of the expected outcomes relative to aims and objectives of the call (25%)
3. Track record of the team (25%) Note: This will be an indication of the teams’ ability to undertake research and deliver outcomes of benefit to both Singapore and Australia
4. Added value of international collaboration (25%)

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity; taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Applicants are expected to address the four assessment criteria in their application and should closely consider the relevant category descriptors (Attachment A). The category descriptors are used by GRP members to score each application against each criterion. This ensures a consistent framework by which applications are scored.

3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander additional Criteria

All applications that are identified as relating to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria. Further information on how these criteria are assessed is provided under section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

4. How to apply
As this joint grant call is utilising NHMRC’s RGMS, the CIA and Administering Institution will need to be Australian. This is for administrative purposes only. We fully respect that there are two lead Chief Investigators (equivalent to CIA), one from Australia and one from Singapore for every collaborative proposal submitted; however, we request the Australian lead Chief Investigator be listed as the CIA and the Singapore lead Chief Investigator be listed as CIB. See the NHMRC-A*STAR Advice and Instructions to Applicants for further detail. Further information on RGMS can be found on the NHMRC website.

5. Formatting requirements

The documents making up the joint Grant Proposal are a key source of information for assessors from both Australia and Singapore. Note that only one joint Grant Proposal is to be submitted in RGMS.

The Australian CIA must ensure the following documents are submitted via RGMS before the close of the application round:

- application details Parts A and B
- joint Grant Proposal.

See the NHMRC-A*STAR Advice and Instructions to Applicants for further detail.

Step-by-step instructions for entering application information in RGMS are provided in the Applying for Grants user guide and eLearning module available on the NHMRC website.

Compliance with page limits and formatting requirements are essential. See section 10 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information.

6. Eligibility

Australian applicants seeking NHMRC funds must comply with the eligibility requirements outlined in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

6.1 Submission of Application to NHMRC

Applications submitted for the NHMRC/A*STAR joint grant call must be submitted via the NHMRC RGMS. Each application must have a CIA (Australian) and CIB (Singaporean). The CIA and CIB are to be the leaders of the Australian and Singaporean research teams, respectively. The combined research teams must not exceed ten researchers.

6.2 Multiple Grant Eligibility

Applicants may only be a CIA or CIB on one application for this joint call for research.

Applicants may hold, or apply for, other NHMRC grants during the period of funding offered under this call. However, the time commitments of the Chief Investigators will be carefully considered in the review of the application.

It is the responsibility of all CIs to ensure that they review the eligibility requirements of other schemes they may apply to during this time, prior to submission of an application.

6.3 Eligibility Check

Eligibility checks will be undertaken by the grant review panel, to ensure that applications fit within the objectives and scope of this call (as detailed in section 1.2). Those that are assessed as outside the remit of the call will not proceed to further review.

6.4 Research Teams

Proposals must involve a genuine collaboration involving at least one research team from Singapore and Australia to be eligible. A research team must involve more than the two lead CIs. The research project requires joint input of both the Singapore and Australian teams.

6.5 Administering Institution

For Singapore researchers: Only Singapore-based full-time employed researchers from all public institutions in Singapore, including restructured hospitals, national centres, research institutes, local universities and A*STAR research institutes/consortia are eligible to apply for this collaborative grant.

For Australian researchers: applications must be certified and submitted through the RAO of an approved NHMRC Administering Institution. Prospective applicants and institutions should refer to the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy.

7. Funding
7. Funding

Funding is provided to the Administering Institution, which is responsible for the administration of the grant (refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, sections 8.3 and 12).

7.1 Level and Duration of Funding

A*STAR and NHMRC have allocated a total of up to $4 million (AUD) to support up to five collaborative research projects. Amounts available for investment may be influenced by the available funding and may be subject to government changes to investment levels or appropriations and the quality of research proposals received.

Grants will be awarded for a total duration of three years and applicants are required to fully and clearly justify their requested budget in order to demonstrate value for money. The GRP will consider the requested budget and may reduce the budget to ensure the project can be achieved, while ensuring value-for-money.

Applicants will be required to submit two budgets with their proposal, a Singapore and an Australian budget. Applicants may request in their budget a maximum of $350,000 (AUD) for research conducted in Australia, and a maximum of $350,000 (SGD) for research conducted in Singapore in total over the life of the grant. It is expected that the two budgets will seek a similar level of funding to support the Singapore-based research expenses and the Australian-based research expenses. For a more detailed explanation on how to prepare the budget in the application, refer to the scheme-specific Section 4.1 of the scheme-specific advice and Instructions to Applicants.

7.2 Use of Funds

NHMRC: NHMRC will only fund those aspects of the application that will be performed in Australia, and will only provide salary support to eligible Australian Chief Investigators and research support staff. Associate Investigators, Singaporean CIs including the CIB (CIA equivalent), and other Singaporean-based research support staff cannot draw a salary from NHMRC funds, nor can requests be made in the NHMRC budget for Direct Research and Equipment costs that will be incurred in Singapore or by the Singaporean applicants.

Additionally, applicants should refer to section 8.3.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for details on allowable budget items for Research Support Schemes. Applicants are required to clearly justify the requested budget in order to demonstrate value for money.

A*STAR: A*STAR funds must be used to support research activities conducted in Singapore. The main research infrastructure essential for conducting the research project should be secured by each research group prior to the commencement of the collaboration. Details on funding guidelines are at section 4, 5, 6 and 11 of the Guidelines for Managing A*STAR Grants.

7.3 Travel Costs

Travel costs associated with the conduct of field research, collaborative workshops and symposia to facilitate international team communication are permissible in the budget proposal as Direct Research Costs. Requests for these funds must be fully justified in the application.

8. Assessment process

8.1 Overview of Process

Applications that meet the objectives and scope of the call (as detailed in section 1.2), as well as all eligibility requirements (as detailed in section 6), will progress to peer review. The scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines outline the peer review process for this call.

8.1.1 GRP Meeting

The GRP will conduct a videoconference to finalise the review of all applications. For further information on the GRP meeting, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

9. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to NHMRC/A*STAR Joint Call for Research awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

9.1 Reporting

NHMRC: The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

A*STAR: The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are at section 8 and 9 of the Guidelines for Managing A*STAR Grants.
**Partnership Projects scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2017**

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Partnership Projects scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Partnership Projects Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines - Peer Review Guidelines currently being updated
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

Partnership Projects will support connections, within the Australian context, that translate research evidence into health policy and health practice, to improve health services and processes.

The scheme aims to support the work of healthcare policy and service delivery implementation agencies by supporting the translation of research outcomes into policy and practice, and the evaluation of current policy and practice to identify gaps in knowledge. This type of research is normally conducted outside of universities and medical research institutes. It is for this reason that universities and medical research institutes are generally not eligible to partner with researchers through the scheme. Universities and medical research institutes can continue to participate as an Administering Institution or participating institution.

Partnership Projects will address the delivery, organisation, funding and access to services and programs that affect the health of Australians. Research may involve preventative programs, primary and community health care, hospitals, community services, the health workforce, and infrastructure. This will include but not be limited to:

In relation to translating research outcomes into policy and practice:

- studies of mechanisms of knowledge transfer and exchange which will lead to improved Australian health outcomes through improved health services
- research involving preventative programs, primary and community health care, hospitals, access to services, workforce, infrastructure and funding
- utilise/apply existing evidence to develop advice
- increase reach and knowledge of how to implement through partnerships.

In relation to evaluating current policy and practice and identifying gaps in knowledge:

- identifying opportunities to improve the performance of programs or services
- the evaluation of new approaches to services and programs, their dissemination and uptake
- monitoring and reviewing current policy and practice to gauge its impact and determine whether change is necessary.

NHMRC Partnership Projects will not fund the evaluation of clinical interventions on individual patients e.g. new treatments, diagnostic techniques, pharmaceuticals or surgical procedures. Such research is supported through NHMRC Project Grants and Program Grants schemes.

Projects which are concerned with investigating the impact of systemic features of health service delivery (e.g. funding, planning, organisation, regulation, and performance management) on health outcomes are encouraged.

Applications which address health services and programs to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, an NHMRC strategic priority for investment, are also encouraged.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:
meet the need for a more effective integration of research evidence into health policy and service delivery
create partnerships among policy makers, managers, service providers and researchers
provide support to answer often complex and difficult questions that policy makers, managers and service providers face when making decisions and implementing policies that affect Australians' health and health care
be highly responsive to the priorities of government, the community and health professionals
enable applicants to apply for funding at any time during the year to allow researchers and partner organisations to develop timely collaborations.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Partnership Projects scheme-specific Funding Rules for 2017:

Peer review of applications will occur in three distinct cycles (see section 3).

3. Critical dates

Applications for Partnership Projects open on 18 January 2017 and can be submitted at any time during the year, up until 6 December 2017. This is to allow researchers and partner organisations to develop timely collaborations.

Peer review of applications will occur in three distinct cycles:

- Peer Review Cycle #1 - July 2017
- Peer Review Cycle #2 - November 2017
- Peer Review Cycle #3 - April 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2017</td>
<td>Applications open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2017</td>
<td>Administering Institution partner waivers* for Peer Review Cycle #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 March 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due in RGMS for Peer Review Cycle #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 April 2017</td>
<td>Applications close for Peer Review Cycle #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 July 2017</td>
<td>Administering Institution partner waivers for Peer Review Cycle #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 August 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due date in RGMS for Peer Review Cycle #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 August</td>
<td>Applications close for Peer Review Cycle #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 November 2017</td>
<td>Administering Institution partner waivers for Peer Review Cycle #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 November 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due date in RGMS for Peer Review Cycle #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 December 2017</td>
<td>Applications close for Peer Review Cycle #3</td>
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</tbody>
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* Refer to section 5.2 of this document.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

Minimum data must be entered in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to commence sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for Partnership Projects consist of the following:

- A-PA Part A General (specifically the Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research and Synopsis)
- A-RC Research Classification
- A-RT Research Team (add core team members if known, noting that team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of applications).

Please note: Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).
Research Administration Officer (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and section 6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00pm AEST on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

4. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below (percentage values of the total score are provided in brackets):

- Track Records of the Chief Investigators, Partner Organisations, and Partner Investigators Relative to Opportunity (25%)
- Scientific Quality of the Proposal and Methodology (25%)
- Relevance and Likelihood to Influence Health and Research Policy and Practice (25%)
- Strength of Partnership (25%).

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see sections 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

The Category Descriptors at Attachment B are used as a guide by the Grant Review Panels (GRPs) to assist with the scoring of an application against each of the assessment criteria.

Criterion One

Track Records of the Chief Investigators, Partner Organisations, and Partner Investigators Relative to Opportunity (25%)

Chief Investigators

It is expected that researchers named as Chief Investigators will have an excellent record of achievement and encompass a broad spectrum of achievements, including but not limited to:

- a record of having worked successfully with policy and/or practice organisations
- demonstrable effects of previous research on healthcare practices and policy
- other related service achievements (such as research development, health or clinical policy or practice and influential advice to health care authorities)
- books and other relevant forms such as government reports
- publications in peer-reviewed journals
- invitations to present work nationally or internationally
- previous funding relative to opportunity (e.g. from NHMRC, other Australian peer-reviewed sources, other Australian funding, international peer-reviewed funding and private sector funding).

Please note a maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIA to CIJ) may be entered into your RGMS application.

Partner Organisations and Partner Investigators

Partner Organisations and named Partner Investigators will be assessed by the peer review panel. Up to half of the criterion weighting will be determined by the experience and relevance of the Partner Organisation and Partner Investigators to the research proposal.

Partner organisations will be assessed for relevance to the research proposal. It is expected that partner organisations named on an application have:

- the capacity to use the findings to influence policy decision making and health system performance. This will be assessed by reference to, for example, the roles and/or areas of responsibility of the organisation or the partner organisation’s demonstrated record of achievement in effecting such changes
- experience and success in drafting health policy or delivering a health program or health service
- expectations that align with the goals of the Chief Investigator team.

The inclusion of at least one named Partner Investigator from the policy and/or practice partner organisation is mandatory.

The assessment of these Partner Investigators will be on the basis of:

- relevant experience and authority to support the partnership
- demonstrated evidence of leadership in the relevant field
- experience of translating research findings into policy and/or practice
- demonstrated evidence of successfully implementing change in a field relevant to the proposal

Partner Investigators can also be included as Chief Investigators at the discretion of the CIA. In these situations the individual will be assessed...
against both the Chief Investigator and Partner Investigator criteria.

**Note:** It is recognised that Aboriginal and/or 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.

**Criterion Two**  
**Scientific Quality of the Proposal and Methodology (25%)**

Assessment of scientific quality will include the following considerations:

- the clarity of hypotheses and objectives
- strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design and/or the appropriateness and the robustness of the proposed methodology;
- feasibility
- demonstrated commitment to service delivery
- must be research focused on translating evidence into policy and practice or evaluating current policy and practice or evaluating current policy and practice and identifying gaps in knowledge.

**Criterion Three**  
**Relevance and Likelihood to Influence Health and Research Policy and Practice (25%)**

Assessment will focus on the extent to which the findings from the research are likely to make a significant contribution to influencing health and wellbeing through changes in the delivery, organisation and funding of services that affect health. This will include consideration of factors such as the extent to which:

- the aims and concepts of the project are innovative
- the project is likely to yield new methods and techniques for addressing issues
- the project has the potential to contribute significantly to health policy and decision making
- the capacity of the partner organisation(s) may use the findings to influence policy decision making and health system performance. This will be assessed by reference to, for example, the roles and/or areas of responsibility of the organisation or the partner organisation’s demonstrated record of achievement in effecting such changes
- the application addresses issues which are of national or regional significance in improving health or health care.

**Criterion Four**  
**Strength of Partnership (25%)**

Assessment will focus on the extent to which the application demonstrates the capacity to develop and/or sustain a strong partnership. Factors such as the following will be considered:

- evidence of co-development of the proposal
- the cash and/or in-kind commitment of the partner(s)
- the roles of staff in the partner agency or agencies in the research process
- previous evidence of effective working relationships with partner organisations
- the proposed governance or partnership arrangements
- shared decision making / leadership.

Applications should show how the team will foster and maintain a collaborative approach between the researchers and decision makers, over the course of the initiative.

In evaluating the strength of the partnership, applications will be assessed on the extent to which the proposal is achievable through the provision of skills, linkages, infrastructure and milestones. NHMRC will also take into account value for money in terms of justification for equipment and facilities and other items of expenditure to sustain the partnership.

**4.1 Characteristics of strong applications**

Applicants must ensure they address the Assessment Criteria described above. The research question or problem that the policy/practice partner(s) need answered or solved must be clearly stated in the application and in the letters of support from partner(s). This is required to aid in the assessment of the application.

Successful applications will demonstrate that an effective partnership between the research agency and the policy and/or practice agency has been or will be established or maintained.

Strong applications will demonstrate many of the following characteristics:

- be of a high scientific quality
- demonstrate that strong relations between researchers and partner organisations exist or will be developed
- address issues which are of national or regional significance[2] (rather than local-only significance)
demonstrate that researchers and partner organisations will come together to identify research projects, conduct research, interpret its findings and promote the use of those findings to influence policy and practice for health
have cash contribution commensurate with partner commitment
be led by researchers with strong established records of achievement
have a demonstrated successful pilot if appropriate
be of sufficient scope to achieve significant outcomes
be led by researchers who have a history of attending health policy and/or practice orientated events and are familiar with the environment in which the partner operate
evidence of collaboration with policy and/or practice agencies in the health sector
long term professional relationships with policy and/or practice agencies in the health sector
have a demonstrably high chance of success
that partners will have access to highly skilled research personnel
an understanding of the needs of the health sector
that the partnership promotes regular interactions and encourages feedback
engagement strategies with stakeholders/communities
evidence of collaboration with policy and/or practice agencies in the health sector
examples of time spent with partners
propose original research likely to generate knowledge that will have an impact on relevant management and/or policy decision-making:
impacts can include:
  - improved primary care, hospital care, aged care, management systems, and better preventative strategies
  - new or improved health diagnostics, technology, products, health service delivery, processes or applications by end users
devvelopment of health advice, guidelines and reports targeted at clinicians and end users
improved end user accessibility to health services or clinical practice
research informed health policy advice to government on public health or health service delivery matters
  - collaboration outcomes such as end user involvement in activities (e.g. establishment of expert committees to provide advice to government)
  - increased evidence-informed educational outputs
  - more effective and safer care
  - the elimination of inadequate and ineffective procedures and treatments
  - better or earlier diagnoses, treatment or cures of diseases
  - enhanced health through relevant capacity building measures (e.g. increased community engagement, increased data linkage measures etc)
  - reduced health risks or enhanced skills base.

4.2 Additional Criteria for applications relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Partnership Projects application.

Further information on how these criteria are assessed is provided under ‘Selection Process’.

1 Relevance is the extent to which the application addresses the needs of the healthcare system or an affected population.
2 Significance is the relative importance of the application to the advancement of health policy in a particular field or in a set of fields.

5. Eligibility

Partnership Projects have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

5.1 NHMRC and Partner Funding

Applications must be joint submissions from a research agency and one or more policy/practice agencies which are able to contribute at least 50% of the total value of the research project in cash and/or in kind. The level of funding requested from NHMRC must not exceed the total contribution from partners. Applications that exceed this will be deemed ineligible.

The maximum level of funding that can be requested from NHMRC is $1.5 million. Applications that exceed this will be deemed ineligible.
5.2 Who can be a partner organisation?

NHMRC invites applications involving partner organisations whose decisions and actions affect Australians' health, health policy and health care delivery in ways that improve the health of Australians. Organisations that are capable of implementing policy and service delivery and would normally not be able to access funding through most NHMRC funding mechanisms are highly valued as partners. They include organisations such as:

- those working in federal, state, territory or local government - in the health portfolio or in other areas affecting health, such as economic policy, urban planning, education or transport
- those working in the private sector, such as employers, private health insurance providers or private hospitals
- non-government organisations and charities
- community organisations such as consumer groups
- healthcare providers
- professional groups.

Partnerships with an overseas agency are acceptable provided the objectives of the Partnership Projects funding scheme are fully met.

Each partner must demonstrate, through the application and partner support letter, how they will function as a policy/practice partner for the purpose of the particular application.

There is scope for investigators from the policy and/or practice partner organisation to be included in the applications as members of the applicant team. The assessment of partner applicants will be on the basis of their relevant experience that could support the partnership and facilitate the translation of the research findings.

Consistent with the description and objectives of the scheme, which, inter alia, aims to create partnerships among decision makers, policy makers, managers, clinicians and researchers to improve the translation of research evidence into health policy and health practice, NHMRC Approved Administering Institutions (Administering Institutions) cannot be named as a partner on a Partnership Project application. Applications that name Administering Institutions as partners may be deemed ineligible.

However, Administering Institutions that are primarily involved in delivering health policy and/or health services are permitted to be named as a partner organisation, provided they obtain a waiver from NHMRC.

Requests for waivers need to be made through the Research Administration Office of the Administering Institution and must be emailed to help@nhmrc.gov.au by the relevant date (see section 3). The waiver request must clearly outline why the Administering Institution should be considered as a partner organisation. NHMRC will determine whether a waiver has been granted and will provide written advice concerning the decision.

Administering Institutions that do not obtain a waiver may be listed as a participating institution, if appropriate. However any contributions will not be considered ‘partner funding’ and therefore matched funding will not be provided by NHMRC.

Any entity that falls under the "umbrella" of an Administering Institution who has not obtained a waiver is considered to be part of that Administering Institution and cannot be named as a partner. Such entities include those:

- with the same Australian Business Number/Australian Company Number as an Administering Institution
- under the governance of an Administering Institution
- that are not a legal entity of their own, and fall under the auspices of an Administering Institution.

An Administering Institution cannot partner with themselves (including their own entities), regardless of whether a waiver has been obtained.

It is for each applicant to consider the most appropriate partner(s) for their particular project. The Partnership Projects GRP will assess the appropriateness and value of proposed partnerships. There is no limitation to the number of partners named on a Partnership Projects application.

5.3 Multiple Applications/Grants

Applicants are free to hold, or apply for, other NHMRC grants during the period of funding offered under a current round. However, the time commitments of the Chief Investigators (CIs) will be carefully considered in the review of the application.

Applicants are not allowed to submit the same or a substantially similar application in the same or another round until the outcome of their application is known. Any such application will be deemed ineligible and excluded from consideration. Applicants may apply concurrently with significantly different project plans in the same or following round(s). Letters of support from partners must reflect the new project plan (i.e. not that in the previous application).

5.4 Unsuccessful Applications
Upon receiving advice that an application is unsuccessful, an applicant may re-apply to this scheme at the next available opportunity. New letters of support from partners are required. There is no requirement to identify the application as a revision of a previous application.

6. Funding

6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Partnership Projects are for five years or less and the maximum amount of NHMRC funding that may be requested for a single application is $1.5 million. Refer to section 8.1 the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information on how budgets and duration are assessed and determined.

6.2 Use of Funds

Partnership Project funds may only be expended on Direct Research Costs as outlined in the NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines, section 8.3.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and elsewhere in this section.

The Administering Institution must agree to provide basic facilities, where relevant to the project, which will not be funded under NHMRC Partnership Projects.

NHMRC does not provide Chief Investigator (CI) or Associate Investigator (AI) salary support through this scheme. These salaries could be sought from policy/practice partner(s) or participating institutions. However, any salary support contributions made by a policy/practice partner(s) or participating institutions will not be matched by NHMRC. Matched funding can be sought for Partner Investigators (including Partner Investigators who are also listed as a Chief Investigator).

Administering Institutions cannot be named as partners on Partnership Projects applications unless they have obtained a waiver. If no waiver is obtained, their contributions to the project will not be considered as cash or in-kind contributions and they will not attract matched funding from NHMRC (see section 5.2). Please note, Administering Institutions that do not obtain a waiver may be listed as a participating institution, if appropriate. However, any contributions will not be considered ‘partner funding’ and therefore matched funding will not be provided.

Salaries for research staff must be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). Advice on PSPs can be found on the Budget Mechanisms for NHMRC Research Funding page.

Applicants must clearly justify all requested budget items in order to demonstrate value for money. See the NHMRC Advice and Instructions for Applicants 2017 and Partnership Projects Grants Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants for a detailed explanation on how to prepare the budget in the application.

PhD students may be named as Chief Investigators on Partnership Project applications, under exceptional circumstances, if appropriate for the proposed research project (see section 7.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).

6.3 Funding of the Partnership

Under this initiative NHMRC will provide funding to an equal or lesser value of the funding committed by the policy/practice partner(s) identified in the application, provided that it is justified and is consistent with the NHMRC Funding Rules and Partnership Projects Funding Rules. The funding requested from NHMRC should cover research expenses not already paid for by the partner, and not exceed $1.5 million. NHMRC reserves the right to adjust budgets and to not match partner support where it would be inappropriate or is not justified. Partner funding can be provided as cash and/or in-kind. While there is no mandated ratio of cash vs. in-kind contribution, cash contributions provide strong evidence of the policy partner’s commitment to the research and its eventual outcomes, and are strongly encouraged.

Partner organisations must make a combined total contribution of at least the same value (in cash and/or in-kind) as is sought from the NHMRC. Detailed explanation of the purpose of the cash contribution and justification of in-kind contributions will be required. Funding committed by the partner agency must be entered into RGMS and confirmed in a letter of support to be provided as part of the application. A value must be placed on each contribution, for either cash or in-kind. Where no value of support is stated, NHMRC will not list the organisation as a partner in the event that the application is successful. Partner agencies should not offer funding from sources yet to be confirmed, funding that has already been provided prior to the application being submitted, and from funding provided by NHMRC under other schemes. For example, the time of an NHMRC Fellow must not be identified as an in-kind contribution.

What can be claimed as a cash contribution?

- The salary costs of new staff employed and dedicated to work on the research.
- Funds provided as salary support to the research agency.
- Funds to pay for proposed travel.
- Funds to purchase new equipment.
- Cash to fund direct research costs for the project.
Further information regarding cash contributions, including the Partner Contribution Guidelines, are provided at Attachment A.

What can be claimed as in-kind contributions?

- Salaries or proportions of salaries of established staff who will be released to work on the research.
- Use of existing equipment owned by the partner agency for the project.
- Use of facilities and materials owned by the partner agency in conducting the research.

Further details of how the partner’s in-kind contribution can be valued are provided at Attachment A.

It is an NHMRC requirement that partners agree that the findings of NHMRC-funded research will be published and that researchers will adhere to NHMRC policy on the dissemination of research outputs. See the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Partners may not enter into agreements that would prevent researchers submitting their research findings for publication in the public domain. NHMRC will maintain a publically available database of these grants and require successful applicants to report annually on the status of publication of results.

7. Selection process

NHMRC will establish a GRP to assess applications. The GRP will include researchers from relevant disciplines and people with experience in health policy and service delivery.

The Panel will:

- ensure applications which address Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health and medical research issues are assessed against the Assessment Criteria and the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria
- review all applications against the advertised Assessment Criteria under section 4
- review budgets for those applications that may be recommended for funding
- provide feedback for NHMRC to supply to applicants.

People with expertise in a specific area (e.g., a special interest area) may be appointed to the panel to provide a specialist assessment of relevant applications (provided there is no conflict of interest).

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health will be assigned to panel members with specific expertise in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health research. The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health assessor will use their discretion, experience and expertise to reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria.

Applications in the Partnership Projects scheme are subject to a Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) process where the least competitive applications (up to 50%, based on scores provided by the primary and secondary spokespersons) will be added to a NFFC list. Further information on the NFFC process and the assessment of applications can be found in the Partnership Projects Peer Review Guidelines.

The Grant Review Panel’s (GRP) review of applications will result in a ranked list of applications. NHMRC will then seek the advice of its Research Committee and Council prior to the NHMRC Chief Executive Officer making funding recommendations to the Minister.

For further information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and Partnership Projects Peer Review Guidelines.

8. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Partnership Projects awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 and 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

8.1 Reporting

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in the NHMRC Funding Rules, section 12.7.

Note that where a grant commences funding on a date other than 1 January, the annual financial and scientific reports will still be due on 30 April for the portion of the previous calendar year in which the grant was active.

8.2 Condition of Funding

In addition to annual financial and any scientific progress reporting requirements, Administering Institutions are to verify on an annual basis (due 30 April) that all partner contributions for the project are being provided in accordance with the original application or any NHMRC approved grant variation. The verification may be provided as a written statement emailed to postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au. If this is not
received, grant payments will cease until the condition is met.

9. Attachments

Attachment A - Partner Contribution Guidelines (PDF, 25KB)
Attachment B - NHMRC Partnership Projects Category Descriptors (PDF, 129KB)

Career Development Fellowship scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018

The following sections provide additional information about the Career Development Fellowship (CDF) scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Career Development Fellowship Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

CDFs are highly competitive, four year Fellowships that recognise and provide support for the most outstanding early to mid-career health and medical researchers in each Fellowship category. CDFs can be applied for at one of two levels depending on the applicant’s career stage – CDF Level 1 or CDF Level 2.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- develop Australian health and medical early to mid-career researchers so they establish themselves as independent, self-directed researchers
- help build Australia’s capacity for research in any field of health and medical research, with a particular emphasis on clinical, population health research, biomedical and bioinformatics fields
- increase knowledge and support the development of evidence based health policies
- encourage the translation of research outcomes into practice
- encourage the growth of knowledge-based industries in Australia by helping to bridge the gap between research and industry and fostering an environment that values industry achievement
- provide a means for Australian researchers working overseas to return to Australia to continue their career development.

1.3 Who should apply?

CDFs are open to researchers who have a sustained track record of significant, peer-reviewed, quality research outputs as judged relative to opportunity.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate that they are:

- developing international competitiveness
- developing a capacity for original independent research
- developing research leadership skills
- establishing themselves as independent, self-directed health and medical researchers in a research program or as part of a research team.

1.3.1 Computational Biology – Bioinformatics and Biostatistics

NHMRC encourages researchers who wish to develop their health and medical research careers in the fields of Bioinformatics and Biostatistics to submit an application in the current round of Career Development Fellowships.

Consideration will be given to applicants from a wide variety of disciplines (e.g. biological sciences, computational sciences and mathematics).
1.3.2 Industry Experience

NHMRC encourages researchers who have had past experience in industry and applicants who wish to develop their industry links in their health and medical research careers to submit an application in the current round of Career Development Fellowships.

Industry achievement is valued in the CDF scheme with commercialisation of research being one aspect considered by reviewers in assessing CDF applications. Previous time spent in an industry setting and any impact that this may have had on research outputs is taken into consideration by reviewers when assessing CDF applications. Refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 6.1, for further information.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Career Development Fellowship scheme-specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2018:

Section 5 Eligibility
Clarification provided on which date to use for PhD pass (section 5.1)

3. Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2017</td>
<td>Applications open in Research Grants Management System (RGMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 March 2017 5:00 pm (AEDT)</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017*</td>
<td>Completion of peer review of applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017*</td>
<td>Notification of outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates are indicative and subject to change.

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5:00 pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

4. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the CDF assessment criteria listed below:

- Research output and potential for further career development in health and medical research
- Research leadership
- Vision for the next four years and career development strategy, taking into account the aims of the CDF scheme and quality of the research environment

All applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

The Category Descriptors at Attachment A and the Career Development Fellowship Statement of Expectations at Attachment B are used as a guide by the peer review panels (PRPs) to assist with scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria.

4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Career Development Fellowship application.

Further information on how the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria are assessed is provided under section 9 Assessment Process.
5. Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their Research Administration Officer (RAO), to judge whether or not their application will be suitable.

CDFs have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

5.1 Qualifications

5.1.1 CDF Level 1

Applicants at CDF Level 1 will normally be at least two years and must be less than seven years (as at 31 March in the year of application) from the date that their Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral), unless career disruptions exist (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). Applicants must include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

For CDF eligibility the career disruption must involve one or both of the following:

- a continuous absence from work for 28 calendar days or more
- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined % full time equivalent (FTE)) due to circumstances classified as career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 28 calendar days or more. For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 140 calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 28 calendar days.

The only documents that will be accepted as evidence for career disruption are medical certificates and letters from an applicant's employer summarising the duration (including start date, end date, %FTE) and type of leave taken and/or part-time employment (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave).

An example of acceptable career disruption evidence is provided on the NHMRC website.

5.1.2 CDF Level 2

Applicants at CDF Level 2 will normally be at least seven years and must be less than 12 years (as at 31 March in the year of application) from the date that their PhD thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral), unless career disruptions exist (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). Applicants must include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

For CDF eligibility the career disruption must involve one or both of the following:

- a continuous absence from work for 28 calendar days or more
- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined %FTE) due to circumstances classified as career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 28 calendar days or more. For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 140 calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 28 calendar days.

The only documents that will be accepted as evidence for career disruption are medical certificates and letters from an applicant's employer summarising the duration (including start date, end date, FTE) and type of leave taken and/or part-time employment (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave).

An example of acceptable career disruption evidence is provided on the NHMRC website.

5.1.3 Equivalent research qualification or experience

Applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research qualification or experience may also be eligible to apply. This is a qualification or experience equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013.

Eligibility restrictions in terms of time elapsed since the qualification or relevant research experience was obtained as stated in sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 above still apply.

5.2 Multiple Applications

Applicants with less than seven years from the date that their PhD thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral) are eligible to apply at either CDF Level 1 or CDF Level 2, but not both.

If an applicant submits applications at both CDF Level 1 and CDF Level 2, both applications will be ineligible.

If an applicant submits multiple applications at the same CDF level, all their applications will be ineligible, even if they are submitted in different categories.
5.3 Professor and Associate Professor Applicants

Given that an aim of the CDF scheme is to "develop Australian health and medical early to mid-career researchers so they establish themselves as independent, self-directed researchers", the following eligibility restrictions apply:

5.3.1 Professorial positions and titles

Applicants who have been appointed to a Professorial position (including Adjunct, Clinical, Conjoint, Honorary, etc. positions) by an institution or have a Professorial title at time of application are not eligible to apply for either level of CDF.

5.3.2 Associate Professorial positions and titles

Applicants who have been appointed to an Associate Professorial position (including Adjunct, Clinical, Conjoint, Honorary, etc. positions) by an institution or have an Associate Professor title at time of application are not eligible to apply for a CDF Level 1.

5.4 Current or Former CDF, Research Fellowship or Practitioner Fellowship Holders

CDFs are a non-renewable award.

Prior to the 2007 application year (for awards commencing in 2008), CDAs were a single level award of five years duration. Those who have held or currently hold one of these ‘old scheme’ CDAs:

- are not eligible to apply at CDF Level 1
- are eligible to apply for a CDF at Level 2 if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Applicants who have held or currently hold a CDF Level 1 award:

- are not eligible to apply for a CDF at Level 1
- are eligible to apply for a CDF at Level 2 if they meet all other eligibility requirements. If the applicant is successful in their application to CDF Level 2 and accepts the award, they must relinquish their current CDF Level 1.

Applicants who have held or currently hold a CDF Level 2 award are not eligible to apply for a CDF Level 1 or CDF Level 2.

Applicants who have held or currently hold an NHMRC Research Fellowship or Practitioner Fellowship are not eligible to apply for either level of CDF.

5.5 Citizenship

For information on citizenship, refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 7.4.

Note: Applicants who are not Australian Citizens (as indicated in Pro-PD: Personal Details of their Profile in RGMS) must indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.

5.6 Time Commitment

5.6.1 Full-time Career Development Fellowships

These are intended to provide support for fellows who are employed at 1.0 FTE to engage in research. Full-time fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 80% of this time (i.e. 0.8 FTE) to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

The remaining 0.2 FTE may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

5.6.2 Professional Part-time Fellowship Option

A professional part-time option is available for applicants to the Clinical, Population Health or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellowship categories. This option allows Fellowship holders in these categories to share their time between research and their other professional activity (refer to sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.5 for details).

Professional part-time Fellowships are available for 40-90% of a full-time position with the value of the award adjusted pro-rata. Applications for professional part-time Fellowships must be justified in professional terms, i.e. applicants must plan to combine their professional activities with their research and be able to demonstrate an interface between the two, and must be supported by their employer.
These Fellowships are intended to be held part-time for the duration of the Fellowship, however, fellows may seek to convert from part-time to full-time (see section 10.5).

When the part-time option is taken, the combined time spent on research and on the associated professional activity, must equate to at least 1.0 FTE. For the research component, 80% of that time must be devoted to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if the research component is 0.5 FTE, then 0.4 FTE (i.e. 80% of the research component) must be directed towards research. The remaining 20% of the research component may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

**Note:** Part-time options are not available for the RD Wright Biomedical or Industry Career Development Fellowship categories, except as described in section 5.6.3, below.

### 5.6.3 Personal Part-time Fellowship Option

There are also occasions when researchers who wish to maintain a research career are unable to do so because their capacity to engage in full-time employment is limited due to pregnancy, major illness or carer responsibilities including parental leave.

In these circumstances, researchers in all categories, including those whose Fellowships are already taken on a professional part-time basis (under section 5.6.2, above), are able to receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situations and part-time research. Researchers may select this option at the time of application or convert to it during the course of a Fellowship. If they convert, they can do so temporarily – refer to sections 10.4 and 10.5 for details on increasing or reducing time commitments.

Under this part-time option, a brief justification must be provided. The non-Fellowship time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a fellow’s personal circumstances, and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities. The only exception is for fellows who already hold a Fellowship on a part-time basis as described in section 5.6.2.

Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if a part-time Fellowship is held at 0.5 FTE, at least 80% (i.e. 0.4 FTE) of that time should be devoted to research. The remaining 20% of the research component may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including clinical responsibilities, commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

These part-time options are available for 50-90% of a full-time position.

### 6. Categories of award

There are several categories of award for CDFs at each level. In addition, applicants may also indicate they wish to be considered for a co-funded award or the Bernie Banton Fellowship (see section 7). A brief description of each category is provided below and for further guidance on the category in which to apply, a list of past successful applicants in each category is available on the NHMRC website.

#### 6.1 R.D. Wright Biomedical Career Development Fellowships

These Fellowships are available for any aspect of biomedical research or fundamental research relevant to health. They are normally full-time Fellowships and recipients would normally be expected to work full-time on the development of their research careers during the term of the award.

#### 6.2 Clinical Career Development Fellowships

Clinical research involves contact with patients or has a direct link to patient outcomes, and applicants in this category must demonstrate medical or allied health professional activity.

The Fellowships can be full-time or part-time. Professional part-time Clinical Fellowships are for people who wish to maintain an active research role but continue to provide clinical care (refer to section 5.6.2).

#### 6.3 Population Health Career Development Fellowships

These Fellowships are available for public health and health service delivery research.

The Fellowships can be full-time or part-time. Professional part-time Population Health Fellowships are available for researchers who want to maintain an active role in the delivery of public health services or the development of public health policy (refer to section 5.6.2).

#### 6.4 Industry Career Development Fellowships
These Fellowships are normally full-time awards only. They are intended to support researchers with a track record of research excellence and commercial interest so they can spend between one and two years of their award research time in an industry placement to enhance and develop skills and knowledge in the translation, product development, marketability or commercialisation of research findings. Although section 7.2.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 is generally applicable to all CDF applicants, industry placements for Industry CDF holders may be conducted either in Australia or overseas, while the balance of the Fellowship must be undertaken at a research institution in Australia. The industry placement need not be taken over a single continuous period, but should provide maximum exposure to research at the commercial interface. Applicants need to provide clear evidence of engagement with their industry partner.

These Fellowships are designed to support research and development work undertaken in such human health related fields as diagnostics, medical devices, pharmaceutical product development, biotechnology, biomaterials, disease management systems, organic synthesis, fermentation technologies, manufacturing technologies, clinical trials, toxicology, etc.

6.5 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Fellowships

NHMRC is committed to ensuring opportunities are available for researchers who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent in health research across all its People Support programs.

Applicants to this category must be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and may be conducting research in any health or medical research field. The Fellowship can be full-time or part-time (refer to section 5.6.2).

7. Types of applicant

7.1 Co-Funded Career Development Fellowships

NHMRC will offer CDF co-funding opportunities with several organisations. The most current information is available on the NHMRC website.

These Fellowships are offered through co-funding partnerships established between NHMRC and each partner organisation. They offer additional opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the concerns and research interests of the partner organisations.

The evaluation and ranking of an application by NHMRC is entirely independent of any assessment made by co-funding partners.

For the purposes of the Privacy Act 1988 (refer to section 9.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for more detail), applicants and other persons whose details appear in grant applications (e.g. other investigators) should be aware that if they indicate they wish to be considered for co-funding, NHMRC may provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes, to the co-funding body or bodies nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information to the co-funder(s) is to enable them to assess the application’s eligibility for funding under the relevant co-funding arrangement.

Further information on partners’ research interests and priorities may be found on the NHMRC website.

In the event that a co-funder is unable to fulfil their obligation, NHMRC will continue to support the Fellowship at the normal salary package rate for the category and level of Fellowship awarded. Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the co-funding partner are not able to be supported by NHMRC.

Note: Some co-funding organisations may require a separate application to be provided to them in addition to the one provided to NHMRC, and it may be beneficial for applicants to contact the co-funding organisation to identify any additional requirements that might apply.

7.2 Bernie Banton Fellowship

The Bernie Banton Fellowship is an annual Fellowship that was established to commemorate the life of Bernie Banton through supporting health and medical research that has the greatest potential to make an impact on the treatment of mesothelioma. To be eligible for this Fellowship, an applicant must be working in the field of mesothelioma and asbestosis. The Fellowship will be awarded to the most highly ranked, funded applicant, who is undertaking research in this field. This Fellowship does not provide funding in addition to that already available in the Career Development Fellowship package.

8. Funding

For information on the number of Career Development Fellowship grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

The two levels of Career Development Fellowship are each four year Fellowships whether taken full or part-time. See section 5.6 for a summary of the time commitment options available for each category of Fellowship.
The Fellowship funding package is provided to assist with employing the fellow. The actual level of remuneration received by a fellow is agreed through negotiation between the fellow and their Administering Institution. Refer to the NHMRC website for the annual amounts provided for the Fellowship package.

For part-time Fellowships, annual payments are adjusted pro-rata.

The level of this package will apply for the duration of the Fellowship. With the exception of annual indexation, no additional funds will be provided.

Applicants, who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship, are expected to commence their Fellowship on 1 January of the first year of the grant.

8.2 Use of Funds

The package includes salary, travel, all salary on-costs (including payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave etc.) and maintenance.

Fellowship recipients will be responsible for negotiating with their employing institution on the split of funds (level of salary, on-costs, travel and maintenance) within the total provided.

8.3 Other Salary or Research Funding Sources

NHMRC Career Development Fellows are not able to personally receive salary from a comparable Government funded grant, full-time salaried academic position, or other full-time position in conjunction with their NHMRC Career Development Fellowship. NHMRC Career Development Fellows must inform NHMRC if such situations arise during the course of the CDF (see section 10.1). However, NHMRC Career Development Fellows are permitted to receive additional “top-up” funding from their employing institution.

When applying for a Career Development Fellowship, applicants must declare the source, duration and levels of funding already held for salary and/or research in the particular area of the application, including all NHMRC funding, in order to ensure funding is not duplicated by the Commonwealth.

8.4 General Requirements

For professional part-time Fellowships in the Clinical, Population Health, or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander categories, the applicant’s employer (e.g. hospital or government agency) must fund the balance of the applicant’s time that is not devoted to research. The time devoted to research and the complementary balance of time funded by the employer, when combined, must equate to a 1.0 FTE, except in instances where there is an additional part-time component due to illness or carer responsibility (see section 5.6.3). If the employer’s support is withdrawn, the award will terminate unless there is support from another employer for the remaining term of the Fellowship. Fellowship holders must advise NHMRC through their Administering Institution if such an event occurs.

Applicants for professional part-time Fellowships in the Clinical, Population Health, or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander categories, must submit a written undertaking from their employer confirming that they have an appropriate and complementary salaried position for the period of the award.

8.5 Minister’s Medal

The Commonwealth Health Minister’s Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research is a $50,000 grant awarded to one successful CDF applicant in recognition of their outstanding achievement in the field of health and medical research. The award supplements the Fellowship to provide additional support for the recipient’s research. The funds should be spent in accordance with section 8.2 and reported on as per normal CDF funds.

The award will be given to the top ranked CDF applicant who accepts their CDF.

9. Assessment process

For information about the peer review process refer to the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and CDF Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines 2017.

10. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Career Development Fellowship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and on the NHMRC website.
10.1 General

If an applicant’s employment circumstances and/or Administering Institution change following submission of an application for a Career Development Fellowship or during the course of a current Fellowship, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, NHMRC is to be notified immediately.

Requests to vary the terms of a Career Development Fellowship should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation portal. Fellows should consult the NHMRC website and contact the RAO at their Administering Institution if they require additional information.

10.2 Suspension of Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Career Development Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including pregnancy, major illness and carer responsibilities including parental leave, but not for vocational reasons such as wishing to work part-time as a lecturer, or as a medical or health professional practitioner. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Fellow’s Administering Institution. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension.

10.3 Parental Leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the fellow’s Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their Fellowship (see section 10.2).

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.4 Request to Reduce Time Commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that the need for a Fellow to continue in a full-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Full-time Fellows may apply to undertake a period of their award on a part-time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support, but not for vocational reasons such as wishing to work part-time as a lecturer, or as a medical or health professional practitioner. Requests to convert to part-time will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Fellow’s Administering Institution.

In all cases where part-time status is approved, the duration of the Fellowship will be extended to compensate for the part-time period with salary paid pro-rata in accordance with the part-time rate requested.

10.5 Request to Increase Time Commitment

While part-time Career Development Fellowships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time. Where a request to convert or return to full-time is approved, the remaining part-time portion of the Fellowship will be converted to the full-time equivalent of that part-time rate, i.e. if 3 years remain on a Fellowship held at 0.5 FTE, it will be converted to 1.5 years full-time.

10.6 Reporting

Refer to the NHMRC website for information regarding reporting requirements.

11. Attachments

Attachment A - Career Development Fellowships Category Descriptors (PDF, 65KB)
Attachment B - Statement of Expectations (PDF, 10KB)

Boosting Dementia Research Grants scheme-specific funding rules

The following sections provide additional information about the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:
The NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, which set out the rules, objectives and other considerations relevant to NHMRC funding
the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines, which outlines the overarching principles and
obligations under which the NHMRC peer review process operates
the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017, incorporating the Scheme-specific Advice and Instructions, which provide guidance to
assist researchers and Administering Institutions with preparing and submitting applications
the NHMRC Funding Agreement, which sets out the terms and conditions of funding between the NHMRC and Administering Institutions.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Priority Round Information before
reading these Scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description and Objectives

A key element of the Australian Government’s Boosting Dementia Research Initiative, announced as part of the 2014–2015 Budget, is the
NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR) which will target, co-ordinate and translate the Australian research effort in
dementia. The Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme will provide financial support to approved Administering Institutions to administer
on behalf of individual researchers and/or teams of researchers to undertake research and implementation projects in identified priority areas
that will deliver on the NNIDR’s policy objectives.

The specific objectives of the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme are to support research that will provide a platform for strategically
expanding dementia research in Australia, in priority areas. Projects could include:

- supporting Australian participation in leading edge international dementia research collaborations and networks through joint funding
  ventures
- filling priority knowledge gaps in dementia research and translation
- coordinating large scale cohort studies and analytical epidemiological studies, including phenotype and genotype characterisations
- funding essential research facilities, including brain imaging, biobanks, networks and data linkage studies
- providing a focal point for patient recruitment into preclinical and clinical trials
- driving the translation of research into tangible outcomes across primary and secondary prevention, treatment and care in the community,
  aged care and end of life stages for people with dementia and carers.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the proposed research:

- engages with and involves consumers, clinicians and providers (including carers) throughout the project and beyond
- encourages national and international collaboration, across sectors and research disciplines, to formulate and answer the key questions
  for dementia research and translation
- contributes to boosting Australia’s international profile as a leader in dementia research
- is likely to make a significant difference for people with dementia and carers, and
- is likely to result in substantial impacts that provide a lasting legacy beyond the life of the five year measure.

Outcomes of the research projects will be closely tracked by NHMRC and, in turn, inform the direction of the NNIDR’s future work plan.

2. Critical dates

Completed applications must be submitted in NHMRC’s Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by the specified closing date. The
specified due date, time and minimum data requirements will be stated in the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Priority Round Information.

3. Assessment criteria

Applications proceeding to peer review will be assessed using the category descriptors at Attachment A and against the Assessment Criteria
listed below:

1. Relevance to the aims of the round and significance of expected outcomes (30%)
2. Project design, methods and analyses (30%)
3. Project justification and value for money (15%)
4. Team quality and capability relevant to the project (25%)

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see sections 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the
NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Peer reviewers are identified and appointed by NHMRC according to the Scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines. All applications will undergo
rigorous, high quality peer review in accordance with the NHMRC Principles of Peer Review. Therefore, applicants can expect that any matter
relevant to the assessment criteria and requested budget will be considered in the review of their application. Consumer perspectives will also be considered when assessing applications against the assessment criteria. Issues not relevant to the assessment criteria will not be considered during the peer review process.

3.1 Assessment of Applications Seeking Joint Funding from International Agencies

NHMRC may promote specific opportunities for Australian researchers to seek collaborative funding opportunities with international researchers. Where this involves joint-funding and peer review from international funding entities, NHMRC may rely on a favourable international review to determine the eligibility of Australian-based researchers to apply for financial support for the Australian-based components of research via this Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme.

Applications may be evaluated by appropriate Grant Review Panels (GRP) convened by relevant international funding agencies in accordance with their peer review policy and procedures, using the stated review criteria for the funding opportunity. Eligible applications from Australian-based researchers may be peer-reviewed against the assessment criteria at section 3.

Further information on these joint funding calls will be provided at the time of the round in the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Priority Round Information.

3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Additional Criteria

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health relevance which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, will be assessed as a standard Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme application.

Further information on how these additional criteria are assessed is provided at section 6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

4. Eligibility

The Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme has eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

4.1 Chief Investigators

Applicants can apply as a Chief Investigator (CI) on one application only, for any Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme round, unless the round information indicates otherwise.

Where a CI (CIA–CIJ) is named on more than one application, all applications that include that investigator as a CI will be automatically ineligible and removed from the assessment process (refer to section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). It is the responsibility of all CIs to ensure that this condition is adhered to prior to submission of an application.

4.2 Multiple Grant Eligibility

Applicants applying as a CI may apply for, and hold other NHMRC grants (subject to any limits set for holding grants in other NHMRC funding schemes). Applicants may also hold multiple Boosting Dementia Research Grants awarded through different rounds.

Applicants should note that the time commitments of all CIs will be carefully considered in the review of applications, including for other applications undergoing peer review. Applicants should therefore ensure that their time commitment is sufficient to ensure the viability of the grant.

5. Funding

5.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Funding for the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme will be specified in the Priority Round information. Applicants are required to fully and clearly justify the requested period, including the annual breakdown of their budget on a yearly basis in order to demonstrate value for money.
Subject to the receipt of quality applications and availability of funds, top-ranked applications in each priority round will be funded. $40 million has been allocated for 2016 - 2017 to support a small number of research teams. A number of priority rounds will be run during 2016 - 2017. Applicants should refer to the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Priority Round Information for further details.

Funding will be provided to cover the direct costs of research only. Applicants are therefore encouraged to seek additional funding from other sources, where appropriate. In some cases, NHMRC may require applicants to have secured funding partnerships (for example with State and Territory governments) to support outcome translation.

### 5.2 Use of Funds

**Funding to Support Overseas Research Activities**

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so, the applicants must clearly demonstrate that the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and that the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia.

Funding for research support staff based overseas can be considered where this is important to achieving the aims of the research.

### 6. Assessment process

NHMRC will establish a Grant Review Panel (GRP) of experts under the auspices of the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (Cth) to assess eligible applications using the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Assessment Criteria (refer to section 3 of this document) and in accordance with the NHMRC Principles of Peer Review. Applications with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health focus are also assessed against Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

NHMRC may seek additional advice on any grant application if required.

For applications submitted to this scheme, NHMRC may seek GRP advice on whether teams combine their applications into a single endeavour in order to be considered for funding.

NHMRC may also invite applicants to submit a revised application to a future relevant Priority Round to ensure that the applicants have a chance to respond to GRP feedback on how to better deliver on the objectives of the scheme.

For further information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and the Scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

### 7. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to awardees of the Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

Successful applicants will be integral to the delivery of the NNIDR’s policy objectives by conducting research in defined priority areas. This research will contribute to the NNIDR’s goals to expand dementia research in Australia, to ensure better integration with international research and form a focus to encourage/facilitate rapid translation of evidence into policy and practice.

#### 7.1 Reporting

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Successful applicants must be willing to provide additional reporting on their research during the term of the grant, at the close of a grant or at any time subsequently at the reasonable request of the NNIDR. This may be in the form of a detailed written report for inclusion on the NHMRC website or involvement in a conference/symposium as determined by the NNIDR at any time during or after the conclusion of a grant.

#### 7.2 Evaluation

An evaluation of the elements of the Boosting Dementia Research Initiative is planned for 2018 and awarded applications will be required to participate in this and other evaluation activities as specified by the NNIDR when they arise.

### 8. Attachments

[Attachment A: Boosting Dementia Research Grants Scheme Category Descriptors (PDF, 360KB)]
1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

The Australian Government announced as part of the 2014 Budget an additional $200 million over five years to boost Australia's dementia research capacity.

The purpose of the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships Scheme is to expand leadership in dementia research, by supporting mid-career researchers to transition to leadership positions.

Successful Fellows will be required to participate in activities of the NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR), which provides a platform for strategically expanding dementia research in Australia, ensures better integration with international research and forms a focus for rapid translation of evidence into policy and practice.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the initiative are to:

- expand capacity for dementia research and for evidence-based policy development in Australian health systems
- enable investigators to establish and support themselves as independent, self-directed researchers
- encourage the translation of research outcomes into practice
- bridge the gap between research and industry
- provide a means for Australian researchers working overseas to return to Australia to continue their career development.

Subject to the receipt of competitive applications, applications in each of the following five areas under the dementia priority framework will be funded:

- Prevention
- Assessment and diagnosis
- Intervention and treatment
- Living with dementia
- Care.

Applicants nominate the area that best fits their research proposal, although the NHMRC appreciates that there is often overlap.

The NHMRC also encourages applicants to consider research areas in their application which strengthen dementia research leadership in Australia in the following areas:

- Health economics
- Health policy
- Implementation science
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research
- Clinical, Nursing and Allied Health research.

1.3 Who should apply?

Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships are open to researchers who have a sustained track record of significant, peer-reviewed,
quality research outputs as judged relative to opportunity.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate that they are:
- developing international competitiveness
- developing a capacity for original independent research
- developing research leadership skills
- establishing themselves as independent, self-directed health and medical researchers in a research program or as part of a research team.

2. Critical dates

Applicants applying for a Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship for funding commencing in 2017 should note the following critical dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 November 2016</td>
<td>Scheme opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due in Research Grants Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 February 2017</td>
<td>Applications close in Research Grants Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*July 2017</td>
<td>Anticipated notification of outcomes to applicants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dates are indicative and subject to change

Minimum data must be entered in Research Grants Management System by 5:00pm (AEDT) on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to commence sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship scheme consist of the following:
- General: Specifically, Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research and Synopsis
- A-RC: Research Classification
- B-AI: Application Information: Priority theme addressed by the application.

Please note: Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).

Research Administration Officers (RAO) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data; applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and section 6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in Research Grants Management System by 5.00pm (AEDT) on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced when peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

3. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship assessment criteria listed below:

1. Research output and potential for further career development in dementia research (50%)
2. Research leadership (25%)
3. Vision for the next four years and career development strategy, taking into account the aims of the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship scheme and quality of the research environment (25%)

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

The Category Descriptors at Attachment A are used as a guide by the Grant Review Panels (GRPs) to assist with scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria.

Peer reviewers are identified and appointed by NHMRC according to the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines. All applications will undergo rigorous, high quality peer review in accordance with the NHMRC Principles of Peer Review. Therefore, applicants can expect that any matter relevant to the assessment criteria will be considered in the review of their application. Issues
not relevant to the assessment criteria will not be considered during the peer review process.

In framing applications against the assessment criteria, applicants should closely consider how the proposal will address each aspect of the criteria. Consumer perspectives will also be considered when assessing applications against Criterion 3 of the assessment criteria.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research, by referring to the Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research (the Statement on Participation) when finalising their proposal.

3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Additional Criteria

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health relevance which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship application.

4. Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether or not their application will be suitable.

Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

4.1 Qualifications

4.1.1 Length of post-doctoral experience

Applicants for a Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship will normally* be at least seven years and must be less than 12 years (as at 31 March in the year of application) from the date that their Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral), unless career disruptions exist. Applicants must include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

*Note: Applicants with less than seven years post-doctoral experience who consider they can demonstrate excellent claims against the assessment criteria are welcome to apply.

For Fellowship eligibility, the career disruption must involve:

- a continuous absence from work for 28 calendar days or more; and/or
- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined % full time equivalent (FTE) due to circumstances classified as career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 28 calendar days or more. For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 140 calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 28 calendar days.

The only documents that will be accepted as evidence for career disruption are medical certificates and letters from an applicant's employer summarising the duration (including start date, end date, % FTE) and type of leave taken and/or part-time employment (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave).

Further information on the circumstances that may constitute a career disruption can be found under section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. An example of acceptable career disruption evidence is provided on the NHMRC website.

4.1.2 Equivalent research qualification or experience

Applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research qualification or experience may also be eligible to apply. This is a qualification or experience equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013.

Eligibility restrictions in terms of time elapsed since the qualification or relevant research experience was obtained as stated in section 4.1.1 above still apply.

4.2 Other requirements

Applicants must only apply for one Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship per application round.

Applicants are ineligible to apply if they have previously held any of the following:

- ARC (Australian Research Council) Australian Laureate Fellowships
4.3 Citizenship

For information on citizenship, refer to section 7.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Note: Applicants who are not Australian Citizens (as indicated in Pro-PD: Personal Details of their Profile in RGMS) must indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.

4.4 Time Commitment

4.4.1 Full-time Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships

These are intended to provide support for Fellows who are employed at 1.0 FTE to engage in research. Full-time Fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 80% of this time (i.e. 0.8 FTE) to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

The remaining 0.2 FTE may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

4.4.2 Professional Part-time Fellowship Option

Professional part-time Fellowships are available for 50-90% of a full-time position with the value of the award adjusted pro-rata. Applications for professional part-time Fellowships must be justified in professional terms, i.e. applicants must plan to combine their professional activities with their research and be able to demonstrate an interface between the two, and must include a letter of support from their employer.

These Fellowships are intended to be held part-time for the four year duration of the Fellowship; however, Fellows may seek to convert from part-time to full-time (refer to NHMRC’s Grantee Variations Policy and associated advice page). When the part-time option is taken, the combined time spent on research and on the associated professional activity, must equate to at least 1.0 FTE. For the research component, 80% of that time must be devoted to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if the research component is 0.5 FTE, then 0.4 FTE (i.e. 80% of the research component) must be directed towards research. The remaining 20% of the research component may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

4.4.3 Personal Part-time Fellowship Option

There are also occasions when researchers who wish to maintain a research career are unable to do so because their capacity to engage in full-time employment is limited due to pregnancy, major illness or carer responsibilities including parental leave.

In these circumstances, researchers in each of the priority areas, including those whose Fellowships are already taken on a professional part-time basis (under section 4.4.2, above), are able to receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situations and part-time research. Researchers may select this option at the time of application or convert to it during the course of a Fellowship. Under this part-time option, a brief justification must be provided. The non-Fellowship time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a Fellow’s personal circumstances, and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities. The only exception is for Fellows who already hold a Fellowship on a part-time basis as described in section 4.4.2.

Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if a part-time Fellowship is held at 0.5 FTE, at least 80% (i.e. 0.4 FTE) of that time should be devoted to research. The remaining 20% of the research component may be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including clinical responsibilities, commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

These part-time options are available for 50-90% of a full-time position. Payments will be adjusted to the appropriate part-time rate and the funding period will be extended accordingly.

5. Funding
5.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Fellowship salary packages are awarded as listed on the NHMRC website. Pro-rata amounts apply for part-time researchers.

The package includes salary and all salary on-costs (including payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave etc.).

The package will apply for the four year duration of the Fellowship. With the exception of annual indexation, no additional funding will be provided.

Research project funding up to $250,000 is provided to support the Fellow. Applicants are advised to clearly justify the requested budget paying particular attention to any research cost(s) which may be specific to this field of research and needed for their application.

Advice on making a budget proposal is available in the NHMRC Budget Guidelines for Research Support Grants, and NHMRC Direct Research Cost Guidelines (DRCs).

5.2 Other Salary or Research Funding Sources

Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellows are not able to personally receive salary from a comparable government funded grant, full-time salaried academic position, or other full-time position in conjunction with their NHMRC Fellowship. NHMRC Fellows must inform NHMRC if such situations arise during the course of the Fellowship. However, Fellows are permitted to receive additional “top-up” funding from their employing institution.

When applying for a Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship, applicants must declare the source, duration and levels of funding already held for salary and/or research in the particular area of the application, including all NHMRC funding, in order to ensure funding is not duplicated by the Australian Government.

6. Assessment process

For further information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

7. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellows are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

7.1 Acceptance and Commencement of a Fellowship

Successful applicants must accept an offer of award of a Fellowship by the nominated acceptance date. Fellows who have accepted an offer of an award, are expected to start the Research Activity by the Schedule’s Commencement Date. Approval for more than a four month delay in the Commencement Date will only be given under exceptional circumstances.

7.2 Variations

If an applicant’s employment circumstances and/or Administering Institution change following submission of an application for a Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship or during the course of a current Fellowship, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, NHMRC is to be notified immediately.

Requests to vary the terms of this Fellowship should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation portal. For information on grant variation eligibility requirements, see the scheme-specific funding rules and NHMRC’s Grantee Variations Policy. Fellows should consult the NHMRC website and contact the RAO at their Administering Institution if they require additional information.

7.3 Parental Leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the Fellow’s Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the Fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their Fellowship (refer to section 12.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC Grantee Variation’s Policy).

Parental leave required under state and territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.
7.4 Reporting

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Successful applicants must be willing to provide additional reporting on their research during the term of the grant, at the close of a grant or at any time subsequently at the reasonable request of the NNIDR. This may be in the form of a detailed written report for inclusion on the NHMRC website or involvement in a conference/symposium as determined by the NNIDR at any time during or after the conclusion of a grant.

8. Attachments

Attachment A: Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowships Category Descriptors (PDF, 126KB)

Centres of Research Excellence scheme-specific funding rules 2016

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) Centres of Research Excellence scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Centres of Research Excellence scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

The Centres of Research Excellence scheme (CRE) will support research which aims to improve health outcomes and promote or improve translation of research outcomes into policy and/or practice. The CRE scheme will also support researchers in capacity building activities, including in specific areas of need identified by NHMRC.

CREs will provide support for teams of researchers to pursue collaborative research and develop capacity in clinical, population health and health services research. Funding will support three streams:

- CREs in Clinical Research
- CREs in Population Health Research
- CREs in Health Services Research.

Applicants nominate the stream that best fits their research proposal, although the NHMRC appreciates that there is often overlap. The following definitions are provided to assist applicants to select the appropriate stream.

Clinical research is an interdisciplinary field intended to produce knowledge valuable for understanding human disease, preventing and treating illness, and promoting health. Clinical Research embraces a range of study areas and disciplines involving interactions with patients, diagnostic clinical materials or data, or populations (adapted from the Association of American Medical Colleges and American Medical Association definition).

Population health research is an interdisciplinary field focusing on the health outcomes of groups of individuals. It studies personal, behavioural and environmental determinants of health, health outcomes, and policies and interventions that link these in efforts to prevent ill-health, improve the health of populations and ameliorate health disparities (adapted from Kindig D, Stoddart G. Am J Public Health. 2003 March; 93(3): 380–383).

Health services research is an interdisciplinary field that studies how social factors, financing systems, organisational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, and its quality, cost and outcomes. It provides data, evidence, and tools to make health care affordable, safe, effective, equitable, accessible and patient-centred (adapted from An Organizational Guide to Building Health Services Research Capacity, October 2012, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).

A CRE may be a single physical entity or institute, or be a geographically disparate network linking across more than one institution. Centres are encouraged to collaborate with, and participate in, national and international research studies.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:
support the conduct and development of innovative, high quality, collaborative research
promote effective translation of research into health policy and/or practice
foster and build capacity in the health and medical research workforce
provide opportunities to expand and improve collaborations between research teams.

1.3 Priority Area

In addition to the general aims of the CRE Scheme, the scheme is used to identify and support research Priority Areas. There are two research Priority Area for this CRE round:

   Electro-magnetic Energy Research (EME)
   Primary Health Care (PHC).

See Attachment A for further details.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Centres of Research Excellence scheme-specific Funding Rules for the second round of 2015:

Each application will receive four reviews from members of their stream’s GRP before the Not For Further Consideration list is determined. Applicants will be afforded the opportunity to rebut the reviewers’ comments, please see section 7.

Electro-magnetic Energy Research (EME) and Primary Health Care (PHC) are included as research Priority Areas, see Attachment A for further details.

3. Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 October 2016</td>
<td>Applications open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5pm AEDT 16 November</td>
<td>Minimum data due in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November 2016</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 November 2016</td>
<td>Applicants submit an Applicant Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>(rebuttal) to Assessor Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 May 2017</td>
<td>Anticipated Interview week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised. Refer to section 11 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

Minimum data must be entered in the Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to start sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or “xx” etc. are not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for CREs consists of the following:

   A-PA Application Properties (specifically the Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Synopsis)
   A-RC Research Classification
   A-RT Research Team and Commitment including the names of team members if known (note: team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of applications at 5pm on 30 November 2016)

Please note: Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).

Note: Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data; applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.
4. Assessment criteria

Applications for CREs are assessed by peers on whether they meet the scheme objectives using the following Assessment Criteria, which are weighted equally. In framing applications against the Assessment Criteria, applicants should consider how the proposal will address the associated points.

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below.

1. **Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes (20%)**
   - clarity of research objectives, and theoretical concepts
   - strengths and weaknesses of the research design(s), or the appropriateness and robustness of the proposed methodology/ies or appropriateness of the broader strategy of the research program of the Centre
   - feasibility of the proposed research
   - aims and concepts of the research are innovative or pioneering on an international level
   - likelihood that significant new findings will be produced, and substantially advance knowledge in the field.

2. **Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice (20%)**
   - the quality of the plan for research translation
   - plans for promoting the Centre’s activities to the wider community, including where appropriate, for commercial gain
   - the involvement of end-users and the wider community in the planning, implementation and uptake of the research program.

3. **Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles (20%)**
   - strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and encouragement of further career development
   - clarity of measures for integrating new researchers into the teams including mentoring strategies.

4. **Facilitate collaboration (20%)**
   - Teams are required to outline past and/or proposed collaborative arrangements within the applicant team, and address the means whereby the collaborators will ensure the cohesive running of the research during its funding period, including but not limited to:
     - likely effectiveness of working collaborations and intellectual exchange
     - the relationship with other groups in the particular field of research
     - integration and cohesiveness of the team.

5. **Record of Research and Translation Achievement - relative to opportunity (20%)**
   - Record of Achievement is considered in terms of whether the previous research experience of applicants demonstrates that the team is capable of achieving the proposed project and/or has the ability to deliver the proposed project in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience.
   - Record of Achievement may encompass the national and international standing of the applicants based upon their research achievements, relative to opportunity, including but not limited to:
     - research outputs – most recent significant publications; publications that illustrate innovation and significance to past accomplishments; impact or outcome of previous research achievements, including effects on health care practices or policy;
     - awards or honours in recognition of achievements
     - contribution to discipline or area – invitations to speak at international meetings, editorial appointments, specialist and high level health policy committee appointments
     - other research-related achievements, such as:
       - influence on clinical/health policy or practice, or provision of influential advice to health authorities and government; and impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes; e.g. via mainstream media, the community or industry involvement.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

**Note:** 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.

4.1 **Additional Criteria for Indigenous Health applications**

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the **Indigenous**
Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

These applications will be assigned to assessors with specific expertise in Indigenous health research. In scoring applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, the assessor will use their discretion, experience and expertise to reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the criteria.

5. Eligibility

Applicants should refer to section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for Eligibility Criteria. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

5.1 Multiple Applications/Grants

Applicants applying as a Chief Investigator may apply for, and hold other NHMRC grants (subject to any limits set for holding grants in other NHMRC funding schemes).

The time commitments of the Chief Investigators on the proposed CRE and other grants held (or to be held) will be considered in the review of the application. Chief Investigators should ensure that their time commitment is sufficient to ensure the viability of the CRE.

6. Funding

6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

NHMRC’s Research Committee (RC) reviews and recommends an indicative budget for amounts to be awarded across funding schemes in the first quarter of each year. The final amounts to be allocated to individual schemes for funding recommendations are considered by RC on completion of grant review processes throughout the year.

Subject to the receipt of competitive applications, the number of CRE Grants to receive funding will be:

- up to six CREs in Clinical Research
- up to four CREs in Population Health Research
- up to four CREs in Health Services Research.

The Clinical Research, Population Health Research and Health Services Research CREs will be of five years' duration and funding will not exceed $2.5 million for each Centre.

Applications must clearly justify the requested duration and budget and how it will support the proposed outcomes of the research. The Grants Review Panel will consider this information and may adjust the duration and budget to ensure the research can be achieved while ensuring value-for-money.

Applicants are encouraged to seek additional funding from other sources, including for the indirect costs of research.

Refer to section 8 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information on budgets.

6.2 Use of Funds

Centres of Research Excellence funds may only be expended on Direct Research Costs (DRCs) as outlined in the NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines, section 8 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and elsewhere in this section.

Funding for PhD Students

In support of CRE Assessment Criterion 3, Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, CRE applicants may include PhD stipends as Technical Support Staff (TSS) at 50% of a Personnel Support Package 1 (PSP 1). PSPs should be requested under A-RT: Research Team and Commitment (please see section 5.6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants for further information).

6.3 Funding to Support Overseas Research Activities

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so the applicants must clearly demonstrate that the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the project, and the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia.

Funding for research support staff based overseas can be considered where this is important to achieving the aims of the research.
7. Selection process

Applicants will nominate which of the three CRE streams best fits their research proposal. NHMRC will establish a Grant Review Panel (GRP) for each of the streams. The composition of each GRP will reflect the expertise needed in order to appropriately assess applications across all areas. GRP members bring their expertise and experience to evaluating the merit of applications within their stream.

Each application will receive four peer reviews from members of their stream’s GRP, who will score it against the assessment criteria (see section 4). Prior to the GRP meeting, applicants will have an opportunity to respond (rebuttal) to the comments provided by the four reviewers, who may then revise their scores accordingly (see section 3 for details).

Applications will be reviewed against Assessment Criteria for the scheme. Applications with an Indigenous health focus are also assessed against Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (please see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).

Applications in the CRE scheme are subject to a Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) process where the least competitive applications (based on the revised scores provided by the reviewers) will be added to an NFFC list. Further information on the NFFC process and the assessment of applications can be found in the CRE scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

The GRPs will then meet to interview all applications not included on the NFFC list. Further information on the interview process can be found in section 7.1 and the CRE scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

The GRP’s review of applications will result in a ranked list of applications. NHMRC will then seek the advice of its Research Committee and Council prior to the NHMRC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) making funding recommendations to the Minister.

For further information on the peer review process, please see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and the CRE scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

7.1 Interviews

Applicants invited to interview should refer to the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and CRE scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines for information relating specifically to the interview process. Applicants should note that no presentation aids or additional information (i.e. handouts) will be allowed at interview.

Applicants will have received feedback from the GRP Panel and Indigenous Assessor (if applicable) during the Applicant Response stage. This will assist them in preparing for the interview.

For applications deemed fundable against the assessment criteria the CRE GRP will assess the requested budget against the applicant’s justification for the budget. The CRE GRP will then advise NHMRC of a budget for each application. This is based on the budget requested by the applicant; the requirements of the proposal as assessed by the CRE GRP and its knowledge of the costs associated with the research.

The GRP will provide a ranked list of applications to NHMRC, which will then seek the advice of its Research Committee and Council prior to the NHMRC CEO making funding recommendations to the Minister. For more information please see section 11.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

8. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Centres of Research Excellence awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 and 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website. Please refer to the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and on the NHMRC website under Administering Grants.

8.1 Reporting

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 12.7.

Note that where a grant commences funding on a date other than 1 January, the annual financial and scientific reports will still be due on 30 April for the portion of the previous calendar year in which the grant was active.

9. Attachments

Attachment A: CRE Priority Areas (PDF, 51KB)

Development Grants scheme-specific funding rules (funding
commencing 2018)

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Development Grants scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Development Grants Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017, incorporating the Development Grants Scheme-Specific Advice and Instructions
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

The Development Grants scheme provides financial support to individual researchers and/or research teams to undertake health and medical research within Australia at the proof-of-concept stage that specifically drives towards a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe.

Early stage research or knowledge creation research will not be funded through the Development Grants scheme. Applicants are advised to consider directing such research proposals to the Project Grants scheme.

Research that aims to improve the health and health care outcomes which targets an unmet or poorly met healthcare need for Australians is highly valued. Partnerships with industry/commercial partner/s for the proposed research are not essential at the application stage. However, applicants must provide comprehensive evidence of their strategies to commercialise their product and bring it to market.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- Increase, facilitate and expedite the translation of health and medical research outcomes through to commercialisation, within a foreseeable timeframe.
- Support proof-of-concept research with a feasible commercialisation pathway and a high likelihood of resulting in protected Intellectual Property (IP).
- Provide a potential mechanism through which research outcomes can be progressed to a stage that makes them competitive to receive industry investment through other government schemes or from the private sector.
- Encourage collaboration between health research, the private sector and industry (domestic and international).

1.3 Who should apply?

Proof-of-concept research supported by this scheme should be underpinned by fundamental research and experimental data. The application must be supported by a detailed and feasible commercialisation business case that takes into account the regulatory pathway, protectable IP, commercial barriers and potential pathways to market.

Development Grants are distinct from Project Grants and other NHMRC schemes. Whereas a Project Grant and other NHMRC schemes, including those focused on research translation, may ultimately generate new knowledge that results in protectable IP with the potential to be commercialised at a future point in time, a Development Grant specifically drives towards a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe.

In accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC Act) the purpose of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) is to provide assistance to Federal and State Government Departments, institutions, universities and/or persons engaged in medical research.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Development Grants Scheme-Specific Funding Rules (Funding Commencing in 2018):

- amendment to section 5.2: Exclusion Criteria as part of Eligibility
- new section 5.3 Business Case. Letter of support requirement removed
3. Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 November 2016</td>
<td>Applications open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 February 2017</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – Early March 2017</td>
<td>Applications assessed by expert peer reviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid March 2017</td>
<td>Not for Further Consideration (NFFC) process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May – 31 May 2017</td>
<td>Grant Review Panel (GRP) meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 2017</td>
<td>NHMRC to submit funding recommendations to the Minister for Health and Aged Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are confirmed. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

Minimum data must be entered in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5:00pm AEDT on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to commence sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. are not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for the Development Grants scheme consists of the following:

- General: You must complete fields for Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research (yes/no) and Plain English Summary.
- A-RC Research Classification (all sections).

Please note: failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further information).

Research Administration Officer (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data; applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and section 6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

4. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

- a. Scientific Merit of the Proposal (quality of the scientific research) (40%)
- b. Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) (20%)
- c. Commercial Potential (40%).

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see sections 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Applications undergo rigorous and high quality peer review to evaluate the merit of applications for funding against the established assessment criteria. NHMRC engages expert peer reviewers in the areas of scientific research and commercialisation.

All peer review adheres to NHMRC’s Principles of Peer Review in the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017. Therefore, applicants can expect that any matter relevant to the assessment criteria and budget may be considered in the review of their application. Issues not relevant to the assessment criteria will not be considered during the assessment process.

Applicants are expected to address the three assessment criteria in their application and should closely consider the relevant category descriptors (see Attachment A). The category descriptors are used by assessors to score each application against the scientific and commercial criteria. This ensures a consistent framework by which applications are scored between and within panels. Additional guidance on the
4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

These applications will be assessed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health expert. In assessing the application against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, the Indigenous expert will use their discretion, experience and expertise to reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses the criteria.

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Indigenous health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Development Grants application.

Further information on how these criteria are assessed is provided in the Development Grants Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines 2017.

5. Eligibility

Development Grants have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

It is the responsibility of all Chief Investigators (CIs) applying to the Development Grant round to ensure that they meet all eligibility criteria for the duration of the assessment and the award period. RGMS has functionality available to assist applicants in determining their eligibility, however, this remains indicative only and does not replace the CI’s responsibility to confirm their eligibility.

5.1 Multiple Application/Grant limit

There is no limit to the number of Development Grants a CI can apply for, or hold.

5.2 Exclusion Criteria

NHMRC Development Grants provide support for research that specifically drives toward a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe beyond knowledge creation. Therefore, NHMRC will not assess or fund applications that meet any of the exclusion criteria outlined below:

- Have a focus on the early stage or knowledge creation stages of research (e.g. research that is fundable through the NHMRC Project Grants scheme).
- Contain significant clinical trial component/s (these are relevant to the Project Grants scheme which has a Grant Review Panel specifically for clinical trials).
- Are, in the view of the NHMRC, the same or similar to any application submitted to any NHMRC funding scheme in the same funding year (excluding any re-submissions to Development Grants) or research grant currently being funded or completed.
- Are beyond the proof-of-concept stage, and therefore are more appropriate to receive support in the form of a grant from other government agencies, or support from the private sector to successfully achieve a commercial outcome.

Such applications are ineligible and will be excluded from consideration (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). For reasons of probity, NHMRC will not provide advice on the suitability of an application during the application phase.

5.3 Business Case

Applicants must provide a business case for the commercialisation of their proposed research that includes at a minimum:

- a market analysis
- management of IP
- work plan including relevant milestones
- consultation with Technology Transfer Offices or similar commercialisation support.

For further information, refer to section 3.2 of the Development Grants scheme specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017.

6. Funding
6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Development Grants are available for 1 – 3 years. Applicants are required to fully and clearly justify their requested budget.

The Grant Review Panel (GRP) will consider how the requested budget and requested duration of the grant supports the proposed outcomes of the application, and may adjust the duration and budget of the grant to ensure the project can be achieved, while ensuring value for money.

For a more detailed explanation regarding Personnel Salary Packages (PSP) requests, the appropriate use of NHMRC funds and how to prepare the budget in the application, refer to the Development Grants Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants.

For details on Development Grants applications funded rate by year go to the NHMRC website.

6.2 Use of Funds

6.2.1 Funding to support overseas research activities

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so, the applicants must clearly demonstrate that the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the research aims and that the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia.

Applicants may request funding for salary support for the specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. However, when requesting salary support for overseas activities, the personnel in relation to the request may not be named as a CI.

6.2.2 Funding for Clinical Trials

Applications with a significant Clinical Trial component, as determined by NHMRC, are ineligible to apply for Development Grant funding, and will be withdrawn from consideration (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). Applicants are advised to consider applying to the Project Grants scheme, which has dedicated Clinical Trial Grant Review Panels to assess clinical trial applications.

For details on budget development please refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 section 8.3.2 and Development Grants Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017, sections 3.3 B-PB RF and 3 B-PB Proposed Budget – DRC and Equipment.

6.3 Industry/Commercial experience: Track Record criterion

When evaluating the Record of Commercial Achievements criterion, assessors will take into consideration applicants’ relevant expertise or research industry skills, experience and achievements. Further guidance is provided at section 6.1 NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

7. Selection process

Applications undergo rigorous peer review, and are subject to scrutiny and evaluation by expert/s in the fields of the application. The initial peer review will be conducted by expert peer reviewers with scientific and commercialisation expertise relevant to the application. Expert peer reviewers will use their experience and expertise to evaluate the merit of applications for funding against the assessment criteria (see Section 4 and Attachment A). Any matter relevant to the scientific merit, applicant record of research, commercial achievement/s and commercial potential will be considered by the expert peer reviewers.

NHMRC will collate expert peer reviewers scores for each application and identify applications that fall within the least competitive range of application. Those applications identified as being the least competitive will be removed from further consideration (the Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) process). For further information on this process refer to Section 4.1.5 of the Development Grants Peer Review Guidelines.

The GRP will score all non-NFFC applications and review the budget requests. The GRP will use this information as a basis for panel discussions.

For further information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and Development Grants Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines.

8. Grant administration

There are no additional administrative obligations and processes specific to Development Grants awardees. Applicants must note the applicable general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 and 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

9. Attachments
NHMRC - NIH Brain Collaborative grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2017

The following sections provide additional information about the NHMRC – National Institutes of Health (NIH) Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative (NHMRC – NIH BRAIN scheme) including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific funding rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

The NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme provides a contribution to Australian institutions and researchers who are participating in leading international collaborative research that has been selected for funding through the BRAIN Initiative.

The BRAIN Initiative is a US Presidential initiative to revolutionise understanding of the human brain. The aim of the initiative is to accelerate the development and application of innovative technologies to assist researchers to produce a revolutionary new dynamic picture of the brain that, for the first time, will show how individual cells and complex neural circuits interact in both time and space. The BRAIN initiative is intended to enable researchers to discover new ways to treat, cure, and even prevent brain disorders.

Further information on the BRAIN Initiative is available from the NIH website.

Participation in the BRAIN Initiative allows Australian researchers to engage with world leading researchers on well-funded projects of the highest calibre and assist Australian health and medical research to maintain a standard of excellence.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- provide a financial contribution to Australian researchers to participate in leading international research that has been selected for funding through the BRAIN Initiative and by NHMRC
- foster international collaborations that are of benefit to Australia's health and medical research efforts.

1.3 Who should apply?

Australian researchers are able to apply to the NIH and NHMRC as part of a joint Australia-US BRAIN Initiative application. Applications will be peer reviewed by NIH and NHMRC will consider funding the Australian component of collaborative applications deemed fundable. Funding for the US-based components will be provided by the NIH.

Australian applicants must meet the eligibility criteria (see section 5) for this scheme.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme-specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2017:

- Section 5b outlines the NIH BRAIN funding opportunities that are eligible.

3. Critical dates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 October 2016</td>
<td>NHMRC-NIH BRAIN Initiative documentation available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 October 2016</td>
<td>Applications to NHMRC open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 February 2016</td>
<td>Applications to NHMRC close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January - June 2017</td>
<td>NIH conducts peer review of NIH BRAIN Initiative applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July 2017 (TBC)*</td>
<td>Applicants provide their NIH peer review scores and critiques to NHMRC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017 (TBC)*</td>
<td>Announcement of successful outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To be emailed to Brain@nhmrc.gov.au no later than one week of its release to the applicant.

*Date is indicative and likely to change.

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5.00 pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are confirmed. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

### 4. Assessment

The following will be assessed as described in section 7.2:

- a. Eligibility (section 5)
- b. Budget (section 6)
- c. Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, if relevant (section 4.1).

### 4.1 Additional Criteria For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard NHMRC-NIH BRAIN application.

### 5. Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether their application will be suitable or not.

The NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme has eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

- a. To be eligible for NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme funding, Australian researchers must apply to, and be successful through, the NIH BRAIN Initiative as part of a collaborative Australia-US application.
- b. NHMRC will only support applications to the following NIH BRAIN Initiative funding opportunity/ies:
  - RFA-EB-17-001 BRAIN Initiative: Proof of Concept Development of Early Stage Next Generation Human Brain Imaging (R01)
  - RFA-MH-17-235 BRAIN Initiative: Foundations of Non-Invasive Functional Human Brain Imaging and Recording - Bridging Scales and Modalities (R01)
- c. The NIH application must be included as an attachment to the NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme application when submitted to the NHMRC.
- d. All Australian CIs are to be listed on the NIH application and their roles explained. This ensures that the CI’s contribution has been peer reviewed as part of the NIH application.
- e. The Administering Institution for the NHMRC-NIH BRAIN scheme application must be listed on the NIH application.
- f. The outcomes of the NIH peer review process, including application scores and critique (also referred to as the ‘pink sheet’), must be provided to the NHMRC within one week of its release to the applicant.
- g. Only one NHMRC - NIH Brain Initiative application will be accepted and funded for each successful NIH application. NHMRC recognises
that an application to the NIH may involve more than one Australian researcher. In this situation, those researchers will need to agree on a lead CI(A) and submit a single application. Other Australian researchers listed on the NIH application must be identified as investigators in that application.

h. Provision of the NIH grant agreement is a condition of funding.
i. Holding an NHMRC – NIH BRAIN Initiative grant does not affect a CI's ability to hold other NHMRC grants.

6. Funding

A total of up to $1.5 million is allocated to the NHMRC – NIH BRAIN scheme from the Medical Research Endowment Account. Funding is at the discretion of the NHMRC.

Australian Chief Investigators may apply for up to $500,000 and a maximum of five years for each application. The duration of the grant must be justified within the application and be concurrent with, and not exceed, the duration and timing of the NIH grant.

NHMRC will only fund Australian components of the project. To ensure funding is not duplicated, NHMRC will not fund any components of the project that are funded by the NIH.

The NHMRC will make funding decisions based on the information available at the time of application. Subsequent changes to the NIH application, particularly regarding duration or funding, will not result in any increase to the funding offered by the NHMRC. The applicant may apply for an extension to the duration of the grant provided that the funding remains concurrent with the NIH grant, by submitting a grant variation request to NHMRC (section 12.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Applicants must justify clearly the requested budget, paying particular attention to any research cost(s) which may be atypical for the particular field of research. NHMRC Senior Scientists review budgets and may make adjustments where the budget item is not well justified.

For a more detailed explanation on the appropriate use of NHMRC funds and how to prepare the budget in the application, refer to section 8.3.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

7. Selection process

A flowchart showing the assessment process is available at Attachment A.

7.1 NIH Review

Applications to the NIH BRAIN Initiative can include international collaborators, including researchers from Australia. Details about the NIH BRAIN Initiative can be found on the NIH BRAIN Initiative website.

Applications will be evaluated by (an) appropriate Scientific Review Group(s) convened by NIH in accordance with NIH peer review policy and procedures, using the stated review criteria for the funding opportunity.

As part of the scientific peer review, applications:

- may undergo a selection process in which only those applications deemed to have the highest scientific and technical merit (generally the top half of applications under review) will be discussed and assigned an overall impact score
- will receive a written critique.

Applications will compete for available funds with all other recommended applications submitted in response to the Funding Opportunity Announcement. The following will be considered in making funding decisions:

- scientific and technical merit of the proposed project as determined by scientific peer review
- availability of funds
- relevance of the proposed project to program priorities.

Details of the NIH assessment process, including the assessment and eligibility criteria is available on the NIH BRAIN Initiative website.

Following the assessment, the coordinating (lead) researcher of a successful application will be notified by the NIH that they have been successful.

7.2 Australian Review

To be considered for funding, Australian researchers must submit a separate application to NHMRC via RGMS. The full application submitted to the NIH is also provided to the NHMRC as an attachment to the NHMRC application.

The Australian CIA provides NHMRC with their NIH peer review outcome, including scores and critique, once available.

The NHMRC will examine each application against the eligibility criteria and scrutinise the Australian budget requests.
Where the application includes Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples it will also be assessed against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria as per section 6.2 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 to ensure that the application is appropriate for and of benefit to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. If necessary, conditions of funding may be placed to ensure applications meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria.

All assessment steps for the Australian review are performed by the office of NHMRC.

8. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes applicable to all NHMRC awardees can be found in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and the NHMRC website.

8.1 Reporting

NHMRC reporting requirements are as outlined in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Additionally to these requirements applicants should be aware that Grantees are also required to ensure they comply with section 12.8 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

NHMRC has no additional reporting requirements for this funding scheme. However, the NIH may have additional reporting requirements. Please refer to the NIH BRAIN Initiative website for more information.

9. Attachments

Attachment A: Application and Assessment Process (PDF, 36KB)

Early Career Fellowships scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018

The following sections provide additional information about the Early Career Fellowships (ECFs) scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Early Career Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1 About the scheme

1.1 Description

The ECF scheme provides four-year Fellowships to early career researchers to assist them in their health and medical research training within Australia or overseas (where applicable).

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- Enable developing health and medical researchers of outstanding ability to undertake advanced training in health and medical research either in Australia or overseas.
- Provide opportunities for Australian researchers to undertake research that is both of major importance in its field and of benefit to Australian health.
- Foster career development at the postdoctoral level by encouraging the beneficial experience of a different research environment.

1.3 Who should apply?

ECFs are offered to a limited number of early career researchers of outstanding ability who wish to make research a significant component of their career.
1.3.1 Computational Biology – Bioinformatics and Biostatistics

NHMRC encourages researchers who wish to develop their health and medical research careers in the fields of Bioinformatics and Biostatistics to submit an application in the current round of Early Career Fellowships. Consideration will be given to applicants from a wide variety of disciplines (e.g., biological sciences, computational sciences and mathematics).

1.3.2 Industry Experience

NHMRC encourages researchers who have had past experience in industry and applicants who wish to develop their industry links in their health and medical research careers to submit an application in the current round of Early Career Fellowships. Refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules, section 6.1, for further information.

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Early Career Fellowships Scheme-Specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2018:

- Section 5.1 – Qualifications
  - Wording has been added to clarify the eligibility requirements of MBBS holders
  - Wording has been added to clarify clinical loading provisions

- Section 6.2 – Full-time Overseas Based Early Career Fellowships Category
  - INSERM Exchange Fellowship has been removed as a subcategory of the ECF scheme

- Section 8.1.6 – Overseas Allowances
  - Wording has been added to clarify overseas allowance provisions

- Section 10.4.3 – Parental Leave
  - Wording has been added to clarify Parental leave arrangements

3 Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 January 2017</td>
<td>Applications open in Research Grants Management System (RGMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 March 2017 5:00pm (AEDT)</td>
<td>Closing date for Supervisor Reports to be submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 March 2017 5:00pm (AEDT)</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2017*</td>
<td>Completion of Peer Review of applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017*</td>
<td>Notification of outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates are indicative and subject to change.

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00 pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are confirmed. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for further details.

4 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria listed below:

1. Research Output – Relative to Opportunity
2. Research Proposal and Environment
3. Professional Contribution – Relative to Opportunity

All applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

The Category Descriptors at Attachment A are used as a guide by the peer review panels (PRPs) to assist with scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria.
4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Early Career Fellowship application.

Further information on how the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria are assessed is provided under section 9, of this document.

4.2 Requirement to move research group

An important and fundamental intent of the Early Career Fellowship scheme is to foster the career development of researchers at the postdoctoral level through the beneficial experience of working in a different research environment to that in which they obtained their PhD. NHMRC nevertheless recognises that in some cases, it may not be possible for an applicant to relocate, for such reasons as:

- family circumstances;
- unique facilities available only in an applicant’s PhD institution geographic location.

Applicants who are not changing either their PhD Research Team or, Department or Medical Research Institute during years one and two of their proposed Fellowship must provide a statement to explain why this career path is more beneficial for their advanced health and medical research training. This statement should be prepared by the applicant in consultation with their proposed supervisor, signed by the supervisor and include details of the program intended to develop the breadth of their research career, in the absence of spending a period of time elsewhere.

This requirement applies to all categories of Early Career Fellowships except the Health Professional Research Fellowship category (see Attachment C for details).

5 Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether or not their application will be suitable.

Early Career Fellowships have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

5.1 Qualifications

Applicants must:

- Hold a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in either:
  - a health related field of research, or must submit their thesis by 31 December in the year of application (evidence of PhD submission must be provided as soon as the applicant’s PhD is submitted)
  - a non-health related field, or must submit their thesis by 31 December in the year of application but are proposing to undertake health related research (evidence of PhD submission must be provided as soon as the applicant’s PhD is submitted)

At 30 June in the year of application, have held their PhD for no more than two years (from the date their PhD thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral)) unless career disruptions exist (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules). Applicants must include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

For ECF eligibility the career disruption must involve:

- continuous absence from work for 28 calendar days or more; and/or
- continuous long-term part-time employment (with defined % full-time equivalent (FTE)) due to circumstances classified as career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 28 calendar days or more. For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 140 calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 28 calendar days.

The only documents that will be accepted as evidence for career disruption are medical certificates and letters from an applicant’s employer summarising the duration (including start date, end date, %FTE) and type of leave taken and/or part-time employment (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave).

An example of acceptable career disruption evidence is provided on the NHMRC website.

Applications will only be accepted from applicants who have held their PhD for no more than four years (from the date their PhD thesis was passed...
passed (not date of degree conferral)) as at 30 June in the year of application, unless career disruptions exist, (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017) if they are either:

Applicants who hold a medical qualification (MBBS), and complete a PhD which is then immediately followed by additional clinical training (such applicants must provide evidence of undertaking further clinical training immediately following their PhD), or applying for a Health Professional Early Career Fellowship (refer to Attachment D).

The above applicants must also include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

Note: Applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research intensive qualification may also be eligible to apply. This is a qualification equivalent to the Level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013. Eligibility restrictions in terms of time elapsed since the qualification was obtained as stated in the section above still apply.

5.2 Citizenship

Exceptions to the rules stipulated in section 7.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for the Overseas based and Australia-China Exchange Fellowships are outlined below in sections 6.2 and 6.4, respectively.

Note: Applicants who are not Australian citizens (as indicated in Part Pro-PD Personal Details of their CV in RGMS) must indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.

5.3 Other Requirements

Applicants must:

- only apply for one Early Career Fellowship per application round (regardless of the category in which they are applying). If more than one application is submitted, all applications will be ineligible
- ensure they submit a complete application (including referee reports). Incomplete applications will be ineligible and removed from further peer review
- not have previously received funding for a NHMRC Early Career Fellowship
- have fulfilled all obligations from previous NHMRC Grants or Funding Agreements (including reporting requirements).

5.4 Time Commitment

5.4.1 Full-time Early Career Fellowships

These Fellowships are intended to provide support for fellows who are employed at 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) to engage in research. Full time fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 80% of this time (i.e. 0.8 FTE) to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship. The remaining 0.2 FTE must be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

5.4.2 Professional Part-time Fellowship

The Health Professional Research Fellowship is available for applicants who wish to share their time between research and their other clinical responsibilities (see section 6.3).

5.4.3 Personal Part-time Fellowship option

There are occasions when researchers who wish to maintain a research career are unable to do so because their capacity to engage in full-time employment is limited due to pregnancy, major illness, or carer responsibilities including parental leave.

In these circumstances, researchers in all categories, including those whose Fellowships are already taken on a professional part-time basis (under section 5.4.2 above), are able to receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situations and part-time research. Researchers may select this option at the time of application or convert to it during the course of a Fellowship. If converted, they would be able to do so temporarily – see section 10.4.1.

Under this part-time option, a brief justification must be provided. The non-Fellowship time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a fellow’s personal circumstances, and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities. The only exception is for fellows who already hold a Fellowship on a part-time basis as described in section 5.4.2.

Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship and the remaining Fellowship time must be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities, e.g. if a part-time Fellowship is held at 0.5 FTE, at least 80% (i.e. 0.4 FTE) of that time should be devoted to research.
6 Categories of award

There are several categories of award for ECFs. In addition, applicants may also indicate they wish to be considered for a co-funded award (see Section 7.1). A brief description of each category is provided below. For full details of the categories and objectives of awards, refer to Attachment B.

6.1 Full-time Australian Based Early Career Fellowships Category

These Fellowships are intended to provide support for fellows who are employed at 1.0 FTE to engage in research that is based entirely in Australia. The full-time Australian based ECFs include the following:

- Peter Doherty Biomedical Fellowship
- Clinical Research Fellowship
- Public Health and Health Services Research Fellowship
- Fellowship for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Health Research

6.2 Full-time Overseas Based Early Career Fellowships Category

These Fellowships are intended to provide support for fellows who are employed at 1.0 FTE to engage in research where the initial two years is undertaken at an overseas institution followed by two years in Australia. They include:

- CJ Martin Biomedical Fellowship
- Neil Hamilton Fairley Clinical Fellowship
- Sidney Sax Public Health and Health Services Research Fellowship

The overseas portion of the Fellowship may only be undertaken full-time unless exceptional personal circumstances apply (refer to section 10.5).

6.3 Health Professional Research Fellowship Category

The Health Professional Research Fellowship is a part-time Fellowship that allows currently practicing health professionals to share their time between research and their other clinical responsibilities. Refer to Attachment B and Attachment C for additional information.

These Fellowships are intended to be held part-time (0.5 – 0.9 FTE) for the duration of the Fellowship. Fellows must also be based in Australia for the duration of the Fellowship – refer to section 7.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules.

For this Fellowship, the combined time spent on research and on the associated professional activity must equate to at least 1.0 FTE. For the research component, at least 80% of that time must be devoted to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship and the remaining Fellowship time must be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities, e.g. if the research component is 50% (i.e. 0.5 FTE), then at least 0.4 FTE must be directed towards research.

6.4 Australia-China Exchange Early Career Fellowship Category

Australian applicants: Full-time Fellowships are offered for Australian researchers to undertake research training for two years at a Chinese institution followed by two years in Australia.

Chinese applicants (Chinese nationals): Full-time Fellowships are offered to Chinese researchers to undertake research training for two years at an Australian Institution.

Note: Chinese nationals applying for the Australia-China Exchange Early Career Fellowship are eligible to apply only for that particular Fellowship.

7 Types of applicant

7.1 Co-funded Early Career Fellowships

NHMRC will offer ECF co-funding opportunities with several organisations. The most current information is available on the NHMRC website.

These Fellowships are offered through co-funding partnerships established between NHMRC and each partner organisation. They offer additional opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the concerns and research interests of the partner organisations.

The evaluation and ranking of an application by NHMRC is entirely independent of any assessment made by co-funding partners. These are not
alternative awards but may have additional financial value compared to other ECFs.

For the purposes of the Privacy Act 1988 (refer to section 9.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for more detail), applicants (and other persons whose details appear in grant applications, e.g. other investigators) should be aware that if they indicate they wish to be considered for co-funding, NHMRC will provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes, to the co-funding body or bodies nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information to the co-funder(s) is to enable them to assess the application's eligibility for funding under the relevant co-funding arrangement.

Further information on partners' research interests and priorities may be found on the NHMRC website.

In the event that a co-funder is unable to fulfil their obligation, NHMRC will continue to support the Fellowship at the normal salary package rate for the category of the Fellowship awarded. Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the co-funding partner will not be supported by NHMRC.

Note: Some co-funding organisations may require a separate application in addition to the one provided to NHMRC, and therefore it may be beneficial for applicants to contact the co-funding organisation to identify any additional requirements that might apply.

7.2 Electromagnetic Energy Research

Electromagnetic Energy (EME) research has been identified by the NHMRC as a special interest area for ECFs. Successful applications will be funded through the Australian Government’s levy on radio communication license fees. NHMRC will consider EME research applications in the Clinical or Public Health streams only.

The aim is to build capacity in research knowledge to ascertain the health effects of electromagnetic emissions.

Applicants that select EME funding in an ECF application should be aware of the 2010 WHO Research Agenda for Radio Frequency Fields. Applicants must review this agenda to determine if their application falls within scope (refer to page 7 of the WHO document). NHMRC will confirm that the application falls within the scope of the WHO research agenda. Applications that do not meet the policy parameters will be considered for NHMRC ECF funding only.

7.3 Other Fellowships

7.3.1 Frank Fenner Early Career Fellowship

This award is named to honour the achievements of Professor Frank Fenner (1914-2010). The Frank Fenner Early Career Fellowship will be awarded to the highest ranked applicant from the Biomedical or Public Health Early Career Fellowship category whose research focus is in an area of international public health application, and best reflects the qualities exemplified in Professor Fenner’s career.

Note: This Fellowship does not provide any additional funding to the Early Career Fellowship package.

7.3.2 Bernie Banton Fellowship

The Bernie Banton Fellowship is an annual Fellowship that was established to commemorate the life of Bernie Banton through supporting health and medical research that has the greatest potential to make an impact on the treatment of mesothelioma. To be eligible to apply for this Fellowship, an applicant must be working in the field of mesothelioma and asbestosis. The Fellowship will be awarded to the most highly ranked, funded applicant, who is undertaking research in this field. This award does not provide funding in addition to that already available in the Early Career Fellowship package.

Note: This Fellowship does not provide any additional funding to the Early Career Fellowship package.

8 Funding

For information on the number of Early Career Fellowship grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

8.1.1 Duration of Award

All Early Career Fellowships, with the exception of the Australia-China Exchange, are provided for four years.

8.1.2 Salary Packages

i) Early Career Fellowship packages are awarded at the Training Support Package Level 1. Refer to the NHMRC website
ii) All salary package payments will be in Australian currency.
8.1.3 Use of Funds
The salary package includes salary and all salary on-costs (including payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave etc.). With the exception of annual indexation to the salary, no additional funds will be provided.

8.1.4 Australian Allowances
For Australian based Early Career Fellowships and the Australian component of Overseas Early Career Fellowships:

- maintenance allowance of $5,000 per annum, in addition to the salary package, is automatically included in the funding package and can be used for consumables that relate directly to the Fellow’s research project, research related conference attendance or purchase of relevant computer equipment provided that the computer is above what the Administering Institution would normally supply and that it is necessary for the research. This is based on full-time research; pro-rata will apply for part-time Early Career Fellowships.

8.1.5 Overseas Allowances
For Overseas based Early Career Fellowships, the following allowances may be provided depending on the location to which the applicant is going:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Centres Covered</th>
<th>Annual Overseas Allowance Provided*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UK, Scandinavia and Europe (Western and Central regions), Japan, Korea, Russia, Middle East, USA</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canada, Central America, New Zealand, Eastern Europe</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Africa, South East Asia, South America</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The annual allowance provided is a flat rate for the duration of the Fellowship.

Refer to Attachment E for the full list of countries covered within each tier. The allowances provided under each tier contribute to accommodation, airfares and other related costs for the Fellow and any dependents accompanying them.

No additional funds will be provided for the duration of the Fellowship.

Note: Fringe Benefit Taxation may apply for these allowances. Please confer with your RAO at your Administering Institution to determine how this may affect your funding, should your application be successful.

In the event that an Early Career Fellow has to change their overseas location due to unforeseen circumstances (such as the movement of their supervisor), then the allowance provided by NHMRC may be adjusted accordingly, indicative of the new location, if it falls within a different tier. Refer to section 10.1.

8.1.6 Salary Loadings
Salary loadings are applicable to all Early Career Fellows with registered medical or dental qualifications, whether or not they perform any clinical duties. NHMRC will supply all funds per annum (pro rata) for these loadings on the following basis:

- Registration must be current at the time of application (salary loadings will not be provided if registration is obtained after submission of the application or during the duration of the Fellowship).
- The level of loading payable to medically qualified Early Career Fellows who do not engage in clinical duties (i.e. are employed to conduct full-time research) will be $7,500. This level of loading will be paid irrespective of the department or discipline in which an individual works, or the nature of his or her duties. Pro-rata rates apply for part-time research.
- Where NHMRC Health Professional Research Fellows with medical qualifications are responsible for patient care within the institution where the research is to be conducted, NHMRC will pay up to $15,000. Pro-rata rates apply for part-time research.
- In the case of staff with dental qualifications, dental loadings, equivalent to half the medical loading, will be payable on the same basis.

8.1.7 Other Salary or Research Funding Sources
NHMRC Early Career Fellows are not able to personally receive a salary from another comparable Government funded grant, full-time salaried academic position, or other full-time position in conjunction with their NHMRC Early Career Fellowship. NHMRC Early Career Fellows must inform the NHMRC if such situations arise. However, NHMRC Early Career Fellows are permitted to receive additional ‘top-up’ funding from their employing institution.

When applying for an Early Career Fellowship, applicants must declare the source, duration and levels of all research funding held or applied for, including all NHMRC funding, in order to ensure funding is not duplicated by the Commonwealth.
8.1.8 Short Term Support to Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks

Funding to ‘Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks’ (FIIRN) is available to ECF award holders who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The purpose of this funding is to:

- facilitate appropriate international mentoring linkages for early career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, building further on the intentions of the former Tripartite Agreement and current ‘Letter of Intent’
- support NHMRC’s strategic objectives in relation to building capacity aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

Awardees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are able to request an additional total $11,000 as part of their grant funding for travel to appropriate international conferences and/or short term collaborative activities. Travel within New Zealand or Canada is particularly encouraged. Eligible applicants that wish to be considered for this funding supplement must tick the relevant check box as part of their application in RGMS, otherwise they will not be able to request the funding supplement at a later date. Where there is an oversubscription from eligible applicants for this funding which exceeds NHMRC’s allocated funds to this supplement ($100,000), NHMRC will contribute a pro rata share of the available funding to each applicant.

In order to receive the funding supplement, applicants must be able to demonstrate all of the following at the time of application:

- They are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent (see information on AIATISIS website),
- They intend to use the funds for travel to relevant international conferences and/or for collaborative purposes,
- The supplement was requested (via the relevant “tick box”) as part of their application.

Fellows that choose to utilise the FIIRN supplement are required to report on the following as part of their Final Report in RGMS:

- what the funding supplement was used for
- the mentoring linkages established as a result of utilising the funding supplement.

8.2 Other Awards

Holding non-NHMRC awards in conjunction with an ECF

Fellows may accept other awards in conjunction with an ECF (e.g. Fulbright Scholarship) provided that NHMRC is notified in writing and achievement of the ECF objectives are not compromised by accepting the other award. Deferral of an ECF in order to take up a non-NHMRC award

If a Fellowship holder is able to provide good scientific justification, supported by their supervisor, for acceptance of an overseas award from another source, permission may be granted by NHMRC to interrupt the Fellowship for a period of up to two years. Following the deferral period, support for the Fellowship will be provided under the normal Fellowship conditions.

9 Assessment process

For information about the peer review process, refer to the NHMRC Guide to Peer Review and scheme-specific ECF Peer Review Guidelines.

10 Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Early Career Fellowship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and on the NHMRC website.

10.1 General

If an applicant’s employment circumstances and/or Administering Institution change following submission of an application for an Early Career Fellowship or during the course of a current Fellowship, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, NHMRC is to be notified immediately.

Requests to vary the terms of an Early Career Fellowship should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation portal. Fellows should consult the NHMRC website and contact the RAO at their Administering Institution if they require additional information. In general, ECF variation requests require a letter of support from their supervisor.

10.2 Acceptance and commencement of a Fellowship

Successful applicants must accept an offer of award of an Early Career Fellowship by the nominated acceptance date. Additionally, successful applicants that submit their PhD thesis by 31 December in the year of application must provide evidence of their PhD being passed before grant payments can commence. Applicants who do not submit their PhD thesis by 31 December in the year of application will have the offer of a
Fellowship withdrawn.

Early Career Fellows are expected to commence their Fellowship on 1 January of the first year of award. Where a Fellow is unable to meet this requirement (e.g. they are still waiting on approval of their thesis), then they must submit a variation to suspend their commencement (refer to the NHMRC website).

NHMRC may, at its discretion, for what it considers sufficient cause, suspend the tenure of an Early Career Fellowship for such time as is thought fit, or withdraw the Early Career Fellowship and all payments.

10.3 Suspension of Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Early Career Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including pregnancy, major illness and carer responsibilities including parental leave, but not for vocational reasons or pursuits such as wishing to work part-time as a lecturer, or as a medical or health professional practitioner. An exception is provided for overseas based ECFs, refer to section 10.7. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Fellow's Administering Institution. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension.

10.4 Parental leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the fellow's Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their fellowship (see section 10.3).

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.5 Request to Reduce time Commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that the need for a Fellow to continue in a full-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Full-time Fellows may apply to undertake a period of their award on a part-time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support, but not for vocational reasons such as wishing to work part-time as a lecturer, or as a medical or health professional practitioner.

All applications for a change to part-time must be supported in writing by the Fellow’s supervisor.

In all cases where part-time status is approved, payments will be adjusted to the appropriate pro-rata rate, determined by the percentage of time spent on research. The duration of the Fellowship will be extended accordingly, refer to section 8.1.2.

10.6 Request to Increase time Commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that the need for a Fellow to continue in a part-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Fellows who hold a part-time Fellowship may apply to convert to full-time status. This applies to those who have previously converted all or part of their Fellowship into a part-time arrangement.

All applications for a change to full-time must be supported in writing by the Fellow’s supervisor. In all cases where full-time status is approved, the duration of the Fellowship will be adjusted to the full-time equivalent of the part-time period that remained.

These provisions do not apply to holders of the Health Professional Fellowship, as this is a part-time award designed to fulfil a vocational requirement.

10.7 Overseas based Early Career Fellowships

For overseas based ECFs it is a requirement that the first two years are spent overseas with the remaining two in Australia. Any request to vary the sequence of an overseas ECF will need to be submitted to NHMRC via RGMF Grantee Variation, using the ‘Change in Research Plan’ variation type. It should be noted that any changes must be made in one year blocks for example, years one and four based in Australia, and years two and three based overseas. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will be approved only where the Fellow has demonstrated that sufficient personal or scientific circumstances exist.

Fellows may apply to suspend their Fellowship while overseas for up to two years to complete their research, but not for vocational reasons or pursuits. Fellowship holders applying to suspend their award to extend the duration of the overseas portion must demonstrate that they have the
support of both their overseas and Australian supervisors and have established an independent means of financial support for the duration of the additional overseas time.

**Note:** NHMRC financial support is not available for any additional periods of overseas time taken by a Fellow.

### 10.8 Reporting

Refer to sections 9.20 – 9.23 of the Funding Agreement on the NHMRC website for information regarding reporting requirements.

### 11 Attachments

Attachment A - ECF Category Descriptors.
Attachment B - Categories of Award – Objectives.
Attachment C - Additional Information – Health Professional Research Fellowship.
Attachment D - Additional Information – Australia-China Exchange Fellowship.
Attachment E - Centres Allocated to Each Tier.

### Practitioner Fellowships scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Practitioner Fellowships scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Practitioner Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules before reading these scheme-specific rules.

### 1 About the scheme

#### 1.1 Description

A Practitioner Fellowship is a five year, part-time Fellowship for clinicians, public health or health service professionals to engage in research related to their professional activities.

#### 1.2 Objectives

The Practitioner Fellowships scheme is a key element in NHMRC's commitment to accelerate bridging the gap between the acquisition of new knowledge from research and its implementation into practice and policy.

The scheme aims to support research which results in the translation of new evidence into improved clinical practice and health policy and which delivers improvements in health and healthcare to Australians.

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- strengthen health and public health practice and services by providing an opportunity for clinical, public and health services research practitioners to combine their research with their professional careers facilitate translation of research outcomes into practice
- build future capability for research and the translation of research by supporting leaders who work as health practitioners and who combine their practice with research at the highest level
- contribute to evidence-based practice and policy development in Australian health systems by supporting high quality research to cross evidence-practice gaps.

#### 1.3 Who should apply?

The Practitioner Fellowships Scheme intends to build Australia's research capacity in translational research by assisting active clinicians and
public health or health services professionals to undertake research that is linked to their practice or policy development. The Scheme is not intended to support academic researchers who may have clinical/public health responsibilities.

Practitioner Fellowships are prestigious, highly competitive, sought after awards for high performing researchers who, relative to opportunity, have sustained track records of significant and quality research output, and are performing in the top 10% of their field.

Applicants must show how they plan to combine their clinical/public health duties with their research, and be able to demonstrate that the research associated with the Practitioner Fellowship is designed to maximise the application or transfer of outputs into policy or practice.

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Practitioner Fellowships Scheme-Specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2018:

- Section 9.1 All interviews will be conducted via videoconference
- Section 9.1 Applicants can inform NHMRC of any special considerations for their interview via a webform
- Section 10.3 The text has been revised to provide clear guidance for Parental Leave
- ‘Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contributions’ text included in Attachment A: Category Descriptors.

3 Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 December 2016</td>
<td>Applications open in Research Grants Management System (RGMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 February 2017</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2017</td>
<td>Submission of special circumstances for interviews (refer to section 9.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Initial review outcomes available in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17 May 2017</td>
<td>Interviews commencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/August 2017*</td>
<td>Notification of outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dates are indicative and subject to change

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5:00pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for further details.

4 Assessment criteria

All applicants will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

1. vision for the next five years, and synergy of research and practice and potential for translation.
2. quality of research output (with particular emphasis on the past five years and demonstrating an upward trajectory) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants, national and international profile.
3. achievements in translation of research into improved clinical practice or policy development and activities which facilitate implementation of research outcomes by other practitioners.
4. contribution to research through supervision and mentoring and activities which facilitate implementation of research outcomes by other practitioners.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see NHMRC Funding Rules section 6.2).

For further information, refer to Attachment A.

Applicants should address any other matters that they believe are relevant to the objectives of the Fellowship scheme. Applicants should describe their achievements relative to their field and opportunity.

4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address and will be
assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* (see NHMRC Funding Rules, section 6.3).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* will be assessed as a standard Practitioner Fellowship application.

Further information on how the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* are assessed is provided under section 9, Assessment Process, of this document.

## 5 Eligibility

NHMRC staff will **not** make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether they will be suitable or not and to apply appropriately.

Practitioner Fellowships have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

### 5.1 Who is eligible to apply for the Scheme?

Applicants, for the majority of their non-fellowship employment time (whether full-time or part-time), must work as clinicians or in a public health practice or policy role.

Applicants must for their non-fellowship time be employed by a health care authority (e.g. a hospital, primary care facility, or a state or territory health department) to provide clinical care, or to provide public health services, or be employed in a policy development role in the health sector, and includes applicants who are self-employed clinicians in private practice.

Applicants must be proposing to undertake research that is linked to their practice or policy activity and this research is to be undertaken in Australia (see NHMRC Funding Rules, section 7.4).

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the research associated with their Practitioner Fellowship may help translate research outcomes into revised practice or policy.

### 5.2 Qualifications

It is expected that applicants will hold a PhD or a qualification equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*. Other clinical qualifications, such as a Fellowship in a clinical college or equivalent research experience, will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### 5.2.1 Additional requirements

In addition, applicants must confirm in their application, that they hold or have been offered a funded position in clinical, public health or equivalent practice, or that they are self-employed in private practice and confirm the employer will release the applicant to conduct the research associated with this Practitioner Fellowship.

Refer to the *Practitioner Fellowships Advice and Instructions for funding commencing in 2018*, section 2.12, for further details.

### 5.3 Time Commitment

The combination of time committed to the Fellowship and other employment does not have to equate to a full-time equivalent (FTE). Applicants can still be part-time (in total) to be eligible for this Fellowship.

### 5.4 Other Salaried Awards and Full-time Employment

Recipients of a Practitioner Fellowship are not entitled to receive additional salary from another comparable Fellowship (e.g. Laureate Fellowship), full-time academic position, or other full-time position in conjunction with their Practitioner Fellowship. Fellows are required to inform the NHMRC (refer to NHMRC Funding Rules, section 12) if changes to their employment circumstances occur which affect their eligibility to hold a Practitioner Fellowship. If this happens, the Practitioner Fellowship will cease from the point when the change occurred.

### 5.5 Other Funding Sources

Applicants are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the area of the application, including all NHMRC funding, in order to ensure funding is not duplicated by the Commonwealth or Funding Partner.

NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding.
5.6 Citizenship

For information on citizenship, refer to NHMRC Funding Rules, section 7.4.

Note: Applicants who are not Australian citizens (as indicated in Part Pro-PD Personal Details of their CV in RGMS) must indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section. Otherwise the application will be ineligible.

6 Categories of award

There are two categories of awards as follows:

6.1 Practitioner Fellowships: 0.4 to 0.7 FTE

These are renewable in the fifth year. Fellows may also apply for “Promotion out of Synchrony” and if successful, a new five year Fellowship will be awarded (refer to subsection 7.3.1 of this document).

6.2 Honorary Practitioner Fellowship

Honorary Practitioner Fellowships are awarded in certain circumstances when:

- A current NHMRC Australia Fellowship holder has successfully applied for a Practitioner Fellowship, or
- A current Practitioner Fellow accepts an appointment to another prestigious position in health and medical research.

The following conditions apply in relation to Honorary Practitioner Fellowships for Australia Fellowship holders:

- Applicants must be within the final two years of their Australia Fellowship at the time applications for Practitioner Fellowships close
- During any period of overlap between the Australia Fellowship concluding and the Practitioner Fellowship commencing, the Practitioner Fellowship will be deemed to be held in an honorary capacity
- During any period of overlap, the Practitioner Fellowship will run concurrently with the Australia Fellowship so that time consumed while the Australia Fellowship concludes will reduce the available time and corresponding value of the Practitioner Fellowship.

Benefits available under the Practitioner Fellowship will commence only after the Australia Fellowship concludes.

The following conditions apply in relation to Honorary Practitioner Fellowships for those who are not Australia Fellowship holders:

- Honorary Fellowships are only available to current Practitioner Fellowship holders
- The alternative appointment must be for the conduct of health and medical research
- The alternative appointment must be based in Australia
- The Honorary Practitioner Fellowship cannot be held for longer than the five year period for which the Practitioner Fellowship was originally awarded
- The Fellow must demonstrate that the aims of a non-NHMRC appointment are compatible with the aims of the Practitioner Fellowships scheme
- Remuneration under the Practitioner Fellowship will not be provided by NHMRC during the term of an Honorary Practitioner Fellowship.
- If the alternative appointment ceases before the end of the five-year Practitioner Fellowship, the Fellow can re-enter the Practitioner Fellowship scheme and remuneration will recommence for the remainder of the fellowship. However, the total value of the fellowship will be reduced according to the period over which it has been held in an honorary capacity; if the duration of the other health research appointment extends beyond the expiration date of the Practitioner Fellowship, a current Honorary Practitioner Fellow can apply for re-application/promotion of their Practitioner Fellowship, but if successful, must resign from their current appointment before they can commence their new fellowship.
- Honorary Fellowships are not available to Fellows who accept remunerated academic positions, institute directorships or equivalent positions where their non-research duties and administrative responsibilities are not aligned with the aims of the Practitioner Fellowships scheme.

Fellows who wish to apply for honorary status should contact the Research Administration Officer (RAO) at their Administering Institution for advice.

7 Types of applicant

Each year, NHMRC receives applications from current NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship Level 1 (PF1) and Practitioner Fellowship Level 2 (PF2) Fellows, previous Practitioner Fellows and from researchers who have never held a Fellowship. All applicants are subject to the same peer review process and assessment criteria. The final rankings are established on merit, regardless of the applicant’s previous Fellowship status. However, applicants who hold or who have previously held a NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship should note the rules regarding their eligibility in...
relation to the level at which they apply, as selection of the incorrect level may result in an application being ruled as ineligible. Details on type of applicants are outlined below.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Statement of Expectations (Attachment B) for details on the two NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship levels that are available.

Applicants may only submit one application for a Practitioner Fellowship in a funding round.

7.1 Initial Applicants

“Initial Applications” should be submitted by applicants who have never previously held a NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship.

Applicants should consider their requested application level referring to the Statement of Expectations (Attachment B) and apply at the level commensurate with their research experience and profile.

7.2 Reapplications

“Reapplications” should be submitted by applicants who currently hold or have previously held a Practitioner Fellowship. “Reapplications” cannot be made at a level lower than the applicants’ most recently held Practitioner Fellowship. Current Fellows can only reapply in the fifth year of their Fellowship and will not automatically be granted an interview. There is no limit to the number of times a Fellow may reapply to the scheme.

Note: If a returning applicant submits a “Reapplication” at a level higher than their most recently held Practitioner Fellowship, their application will be assessed only at the level at which they applied. No dual assessment of these applications will be made in relation to a previously held level.

7.3 Reapplications with Promotion

“Reapplication with Promotion” should be submitted by applicants who hold a current Practitioner Fellowship Level 1 and are seeking promotion to Level 2. Promotions are usually sought in synchrony with reapplication in the fifth year of a current Fellowship. However, Fellows may apply for a “Promotion out of Synchrony” (refer to subsection 7.3.1 below).

“Reapplication with Promotion” will be assessed at the level of promotion and the Fellow’s current level. Applicants will be awarded Fellowships at the highest level at which they are considered competitive within available funding.

7.3.1 Promotion Out of Synchrony

Applications for “Promotion out of Synchrony” can be made by a current Fellow, in year two or three of their current five year Practitioner Fellowship. Promotions will not be considered in years one or four of a current Fellowship.

Periods of suspension (see section 10.2 of this document) do not contribute to Fellowship time and cannot be included as part of actual Fellowship time that has elapsed. For example, if a Fellow takes a twelve month suspension at the end of the second year of their Fellowship and returns at the beginning of the fourth year, they would be able to apply for “Promotion out of Synchrony”. They would be in the third year of their Fellowship, even though four calendar years had elapsed since it commenced.

“Promotion out of Synchrony” will not be considered for current Practitioner Fellowships held in an honorary capacity.

Applicants who are successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” will commence a new five year Fellowship. Applicants who are not successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” will continue at their existing level for the remainder of their current Fellowship.

All applications for “Promotion out of Synchrony” must be submitted as part of the annual cycle of Practitioner Fellowship applications.

8 Funding

For information on the number of Practitioner Fellowship grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

There are two Practitioner Fellowship levels available:

- Practitioner Fellowships Level 1 (lower designation)
- Practitioner Fellowships Level 2 (higher designation).

Each level provides a salary package for five years; this package is based on the percentage of time nominated at application. Salary package amounts, per annum, can be found on the NHMRC website.
Applicants who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship, are expected to commence their Fellowship on 1 January of the first year of the award.

8.2 Use of Funds

NHMRC will provide a Fellowship package of between 0.4 and 0.7 FTE. The funding provided by the package will apply for the duration of the Fellowship. With the exception of annual indexation, no additional funds will be provided. No additional claims may be made to NHMRC over and above the package, including additional claims for salary on-costs (payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave).

The employer must agree to make the specified proportion of time available for the proposed research. That is, the NHMRC will provide a package to support the proportion of time specified by the applicant with the remainder to be provided by the applicant’s clinical care and/or public health employer (e.g. hospital, primary care facility, government department).

Pro-rata support will be based on an NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship Package and is intended to fund the agreed amount of time to be allocated to research. Continuation of NHMRC support will be dependent on continuation of support from a health care authority for the balance of the applicant’s salary for the duration of the award. Fellows are required to inform the NHMRC if changes to their health care authority support occur.

8.2.1 Research Grant Support

Applicants must either have already obtained financial support for their research activity or have an application pending. Applicants are encouraged to have research grant support from both the NHMRC and other external funding bodies. Research grant support from NHMRC is available through either the Program or Project Grants schemes. Information regarding NHMRC funding schemes is available on the NHMRC website. Applicants should refer to the scheme-specific funding rules to confirm any conditions or provisions in relation to payment of salary.

9 Assessment process

Information about the peer review process is available in the Practitioner Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2018.

9.1 Interviews

Applicants who have been invited to participate in an interview must make themselves available for their interview at the time and date nominated by NHMRC. All interviews will be conducted by videoconference and are scheduled to commence from 15 May 2017. The interview schedule will not be altered after the advice specifying interview times has been sent to applicants. Where the applicant is planning overseas travel during the period of interviews or has a disability that will affect their participation in an interview by videoconference, they should complete this webform no later than COB 15 March 2017 so that suitable times or arrangements can be agreed. Whilst every effort is made to consider different time zones, it may not be possible to schedule the interview within business hours of the relevant time zone.

Note: If an applicant is invited to interview, they will be provided with details on how to connect via videoconference and must accept the invitation by submitting a suitable alternate contact phone number to be used for their interview. If contact details are not received by NHMRC by the nominated date (to be advised at time of initial review outcomes), NHMRC will assume the applicant has declined the invitation for interview and the application will be withdrawn.

Additional information pertaining to an application will not be accepted nor provided to the panel at any time of the peer review process.

10 Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Practitioner Fellowship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and on the NHMRC website.

10.1 Variations

Requests to vary the terms of a Practitioner Fellowship should be made to NHMRC by submitting a grantee variation request via RGMS through the RAO of your Administering Institution. Additional information can be found in section 12.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and on the NHMRC website.

10.2 Suspension of Practitioner Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Practitioner Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including pregnancy, major illness and carer responsibilities including parental leave. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Fellowship will
be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension and payments will be deferred until after the period of suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension. Refer to the NHMRC Funding Rules, section 12.6, for further information.

10.3 Parental Leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the fellow's Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their fellowship (see section 10.2).

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.4 Request to reduce time commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that for a period of time, the Fellow may need to alter the time commitment associated with their Fellowship.

Fellows may apply to undertake a period of their award on a reduced time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support.

In all cases where the reduction in time commitment is approved, the duration of the Fellowship will be extended to compensate for the nominated period. Remuneration will be adjusted pro-rata for the part-time period.

10.5 Reporting

Refer to the NHMRC website for information regarding reporting requirements.

11 Attachments

Attachment A – Practitioner Fellowships Category Descriptors (PDF, 117KB)
Attachment B – Practitioner Fellowships Statement of Expectations (PDF, 31KB)

Program Grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2019

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Program Grants scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Practitioner Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1 About the scheme

1.1 Description

Program Grants support teams of the highest quality researchers to pursue broad based, collaborative research addressing complex problems. Program Grants provides substantial, long-term, flexible funding to integrated groups of researchers with well-established track records of high impact health and medical research. Program Grants are awarded on the basis that recent past achievements are the best indicators of future performance.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the scheme are to support research teams to:
contribute new knowledge at a leading international level in important areas of health and medical research. Develop novel ideas and approaches to tackle problems for which longer term stable funding is essential. Further, develop and implement training and career development opportunities within the team. Facilitate collaborative use of specialised facilities or expertise, and pursue interdisciplinary, collaborative goals which would not be possible by working on the program’s individual components in isolation of each other.

1.3 Who should apply?

Program Grants will be awarded to teams of the highest quality researchers. It is expected that Chief Investigators (CIs) will:

- hold a PhD or equivalent professional qualification (refer to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition)
- be at either academic salary Level C or above, or if otherwise employed, be at an equivalent level or above in the context of their other commitments, commit sufficient time to ensure the success of the program.

Applicants are advised to critically review the composition of their team prior to submission of a Program Grant application. An otherwise competitive application might be disadvantaged by the inclusion of clearly non-competitive CIs.

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Program Grants scheme-specific Funding Rules for 2017:

Section 7.2 - Interviews
- Wording has been added to clarify applicants’ participation in interviews.

Attachment A - Category Descriptors
- Category Descriptors for Collaborative Gain have been amended.
- Collaborative Gain wording has been amended.

3 Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 March 2017</td>
<td>Applications open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 May 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May 2017</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June 2017</td>
<td>Deadline to provide NHMRC with interview time preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:59PM AEST</td>
<td>Deadline to request attendance at interview via videoconference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Applicants notified of shortlisting outcome; shortlisted applicants invited to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 August 2017</td>
<td>Deadline for CIs to provide one page Research Achievements update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.59PM AEST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 5 September 2017</td>
<td>Shortlisted applicant team interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov - Dec 2017*</td>
<td>Funding outcomes announced and offers of funding made to successful applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 February 2018</td>
<td>Final date to accept offers of funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 January 2019</td>
<td>Funding commences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Date is indicative and subject to change

Minimum data must be entered in the Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5:00 pm AEST on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to start sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted.

Minimum data for Program Grants consist of the following:

- A-PA Home (specifically the Administering Institution, Application Title, Synopsis and Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research)
4 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

Research Achievements (60%)

Research Achievements is comprised of the following four parts:

- Publications and/or high quality Technical Reports – 35%
- Grants – 5%
- Invitations / Prizes / Awards – 5%
- History of Research Translation – 15%

Each CI is scored individually for Research Achievements. The applicant team's score is the average of all CI's individual scores for Research Achievement.

Research Achievements will be interpreted broadly and appropriate judgements about research achievements will be made by Grant Review Panels (GRPs), paying particular attention to:

- factors most relevant to the applicants' fields of research, and
- focusing primarily on the last five years.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see sections 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

Research Strategy (20%)

A single score for Research Strategy is provided to each applicant team as a whole.

Collaborative Gain (20%)

A single score for Collaborative Gain is provided to each applicant team as a whole.

Collaborative Gain will take into account the following four elements:

- Integration of the research teams and program
- Team skills
- Resource management
- Intellectual exchange, training and mentoring.

Applicants should give close attention to the relevant Category Descriptors (Attachment A).

4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health relevance which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Program Grant application.
Further information on how these criteria are assessed is provided under ‘Assessment Process’ of this document.

5 Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not give advice about eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether or not their application will be suitable.

Program Grants have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

5.1 Eligibility Criteria

The applicant team must include a minimum of three and maximum of ten Chief Investigators (CIs). At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant, all CIs must be Australian or New Zealand citizens, permanent residents of Australia or have appropriate work visas in place. All CIs must also be in Australia for at least 80 percent (%) of the funding period. Researchers who do not meet these requirements cannot be a CI on a Program Grant application. Administering Institutions are responsible for certifying and ensuring that these requirements will be met. NHMRC may request further information in relation to these requirements, including evidence of residency and/or citizenship.

Program Grant CIs cannot hold another Program Grant as CI.

Program Grant CIs who have accepted their offer of funding but not commenced funding cannot apply for another Program Grant.

Program Grant CIs cannot apply for a new Program Grant in years one, two or three of their existing Program.

Program Grant CIs can apply for a new Program Grant in years four and five of their existing Program Grant only.

Individuals whose salary is supported through an NHMRC People Support scheme (e.g. Australia Fellow, Research Fellow, and Practitioner Fellow Awards) may be included as CIs.

Associate Investigators may be named on an application and they:

- Are not restricted from applying for any other NHMRC grants as a result of their status as Program Grant Associate Investigators
- Will not contribute to the determination of the Program’s budget
- Are not required to be in Australia for the duration of the grant.

5.2 Eligibility for multiple NHMRC Project/Program Grants

Also refer to the Project Grants scheme-specific Funding Rules.

To enable Program Grant CIs to share and extend their knowledge across other fields of research, and support and mentor junior collaborators, Program Grant CIs may hold one Project Grant concurrently with their Program Grant, with the following conditions:

- Only one Program Grant CI can be CI on the Project Grant applied for/held; and
- The Program Grant CI cannot be the sole CI on the Project Grant applied for/held; there must be at least one non-Program Grant CI.

Prior to commencement of Program Grant funding, new Program Grant awardees must submit grant variation requests for all Project Grants they will not be eligible to hold concurrently with the Program Grant.

The following table summarises the multiple NHMRC Project/Program Grant eligibility rules:
### Program Grant status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Grant status</th>
<th>Eligibility to apply for a Program</th>
<th>Eligibility to hold Project Grant/s</th>
<th>Eligibility to apply for Project Grant/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does not hold a Program Grant and has not accepted a Program Grant offer of funding</td>
<td>Can apply for a new Program</td>
<td>Can hold up to six Project Grants in the year of a Program Grant application. Cannot hold more than one Project Grant after the commencement of Program Grant funding</td>
<td>Can apply for up to six Project Grants, less the number of Project Grants that are scheduled to continue in the year following the year of the Project Grant application/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Program Grant offer of funding, but yet to commence the Program</td>
<td>Cannot apply for a new Program</td>
<td>Can hold up to six Project Grants prior to the commencement of Program Grant funding. Cannot hold more than one Project Grant after the commencement of Program Grant funding</td>
<td>Can apply for one Project Grant if they do not hold a Project Grant, or if they only hold Project Grant/s that are not scheduled to continue in the following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program CI in Year 1, 2 or 3 of the Program</td>
<td>Cannot apply for a new Program</td>
<td>Can hold one Project Grant</td>
<td>Can apply for one Project Grant if they do not hold a Project Grant, or if they only hold a Project Grant that is not scheduled to continue in the following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program CI in Year 4 of the Program</td>
<td>Can apply for a new Program</td>
<td>Can hold one Project Grant</td>
<td>Can apply for one Project Grant if they do not hold a Project Grant, or if they only hold a Project Grant that is not scheduled to continue in the following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program CI in Year 5 of the Program</td>
<td>Can apply for a new Program</td>
<td>Can hold one Project Grant</td>
<td>Can apply for up to six Project Grants, less the number of Project Grants that are scheduled to continue in the year following the year of the Project Grant application/s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6 Funding

For information on the number of Program Grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

#### 6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Program Grants will be five years in duration.

Program Grants awarded through the 2017 round are scheduled to commence funding on 1 January 2019 and end funding on 31 December 2023. Funding will not commence until all eligibility requirements have been met. Delays in commencement due to eligibility requirements will not extend the end date of the Program.

#### 6.2 Level of Funding and Quanta

Program Grant budgets are not based on the cost of the proposed research and applicants do not submit budget requests; instead, each CI attracts a quantum of funding based on assessment of their track record, as indicated by their individual score for Research Achievements. The budgets offered will generally equate to the sum of the quanta for all CIs on the application.

The 2017 Program Grants quanta rates are provided below as a guide to assist applicants considering a submission to the 2017 round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Achievements score range</th>
<th>Quanta Level</th>
<th>2017 annual rate*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.501 – 7.000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.501 – 6.500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.501 – 5.500</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.501 – 4.500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.000 – 3.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Grant budgets may be indexed each year.

Individual CI quanta breakdown of the award is not provided. NHMRC encourages recipients to distribute funds within the team to best achieve success for the Program rather than according to assumptions made about individual quanta awarded.

6.3 Use of Funds

The budget is intended to allow the team to support a range of senior and junior postdoctoral researchers, research and technical assistants and higher degree candidates, as well as providing for direct research costs and minor items of equipment for use in facilities in Australia.

Budgets will allow flexibility to redirect funds to new initiatives, provided that expenditure is consistent with the Program proposal.

The budget for the Program does not provide support for CI salaries.

7 Assessment process

NHMRC will appoint one or more Professional Research Persons (PRPs) based on the number and breadth of applications received. The PRPs will be comprised of experts who will consider applications against the assessment criteria.

For further information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review and scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

7.1 External Assessments

NHMRC will endeavour to enlist up to three External Assessors for each application. Applicants do not respond to external assessments via written rebuttal; instead, applicants may respond to the external assessments at interview. External assessments will be provided to applicants ahead of the interview.

7.2 Interviews

All CIs on shortlisted applications are required to be interviewed. It is expected that shortlisted CIs attend interviews in person, and at their own expense. CIs who cannot attend the interview due to conflicting commitments (e.g. international travel, conferences etc.) or illness/carer responsibilities may request to participate via videoconference. NHMRC will attempt, when requested, to provide videoconference facilities. In the event that videoconference facilities are unavailable, NHMRC will attempt to provide teleconference facilities. It is the CI’s responsibility to ensure the quality of their data connection to the videoconference or teleconference.

Associate Investigators are not permitted to attend interviews.

Should a team have a preference for a specific time or date, they must notify the NHMRC via the Program Grants mailbox (program.grants.preaward@nhmrc.gov.au) no later than 11:59PM Friday 30 June 2017. Applicants will have until this date to specify if they would prefer to attend interviews via videoconference. If exceptional circumstances arise after 30 June that prevent attendance in person, please contact program.grants.preaward@nhmrc.gov.au to request alternative arrangements.

The NHMRC will consider all interview preference requests; however, NHMRC cannot guarantee that applicants’ requests will be accommodated.

Once an applicant has been notified of their interview date and time, it cannot be changed.

7.3 Research Achievements Update

A written list of CIs' Research Achievements that have occurred since the application was submitted (e.g. publications, prizes, grants, etc.) may be provided to the NHMRC via the Program Grants mailbox (program.grants.preaward@nhmrc.gov.au) no later than 11:59PM Monday 28 August 2017. This document should list the publications in a standard journal format, along with the date the publications were accepted by the publisher. A maximum of one page is allowed per CI, and the document must be submitted with each CI’s update on a separate page. A single collated document may be submitted per application. Applicants will not be permitted to provide any other written material at the interview, however, verbal updates may be provided.

8 Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Program Grant awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and on the NHMRC website.

8.1 General
If an applicant’s employment circumstances and/or Administering Institution change following submission of an application for a Program Grant or during the course of a current Program Grant, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, NHMRC is to be notified immediately.

Requests to vary the terms of a Program Grant should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation portal. Chief Investigators should consult the NHMRC website under Grantee Variations and contact the RAO at their Administering Institution if they require additional information.

8.2 Reporting

Refer to sections 9.20 - 9.23 of the Funding Agreement and the NHMRC website for information regarding reporting requirements.

9 Attachments

Attachment A - Category Descriptors

Project Grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Project Grants scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Project Grants scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017, incorporating the Project Grants scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

The previous PDF version of the Funding Rules were indicative and are superseded by this HTML version of the Funding Rules, which take precedence where there are inconsistencies.

1 About the scheme

1.1 Description

A project grant application must outline a research proposal that describes the investigation of a new research idea/s. The proposal must support a particular set of aims and the budget must be directed to those aims. All project grant applications must be between one and five years. Single investigators or teams of up to ten chief investigators are supported as well as New Investigators (NI) (early career investigators); see section 5 for further details. Research teams are encouraged to include early career researchers as part of the Chief Investigator (CI) team.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Project Grants scheme are to support the creation of new knowledge by funding the best investigator-initiated research project plan of between one and five years, in any area relevant to human health.

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Project Grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018:

- Changes to minimum data requirements (see section 3)
- Changes have been made to the eligibility period (see section 5).
- Changes have been made to NI eligibility (see subsection 5.1.3).
- Changes have been made to criteria for Electromagnetic Energy Research funding (see subsection 6.2.3)
- Changes have been made to 2017 Project Grants Category Descriptors (see Attachment A)
- Changes have been made to 2017 Project Grants Indigenous Category Descriptors (see Attachment C)

3 Critical dates

"'81"
December 2017 Application information and templates available

11 January 2017 Applications open in RGMS

25 January 2017 By 5pm AEDT Deadline for submission of New Investigator online forms to NHMRC

15 February 2017 By 5pm AEDT Minimum data due in RGMS

15 March 2017 By 5pm AEDT Applications close in RGMS

Applications in Period 1: Approximate dates for release of Assessor reports
5 June - 16 June 2017;
or
Applications in Period 2:
26 June - 4 July 2017

Applications in Period 1: Approximate dates for Applicants’ Response (rebuttal)
15 June - 26 June 2017;
or
Applications in Period 2:
6 July - 14 July 2017

8 September 2017 Completion of Peer Review

September 2017 NFFC applicants advised of outcomes

October - December 2017* Funding Announcement

*Dates are indicative and are subject to change

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

Minimum data must be entered in RGMS by 5:00pm AEDT on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to commence sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields as outlined below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for the Project Grants scheme consist of the following:

- General – Application Information: You must complete fields for Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research (yes/no) and Synopsis.
- A-RC: Research Classification (all sections).
- B-GRPN: Grant Review Panel Nomination

Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and section 6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

4 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

Scientific Quality (50%)
Significance of the Expected Outcomes AND/OR Innovation of the Concept (25%)
Team Quality and Capability relevant to the application - relative to opportunity, taking into account career disruptions where applicable (25%).

The assessment of the team is not weighted to the CIA but to the team as a whole.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see sections 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

Each Project Grant application is regarded by NHMRC as a new application for funding and is assessed accordingly.

All peer review adheres to NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review as described in the A Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and the Project Grants scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines (see section 4). Therefore, applicants can expect that any matter relevant to the three assessment criteria and budget may be considered in the review of their research application and requested budget. Issues not relevant to the assessment criteria are not considered during the assessment process.

Applicants are expected to address the three assessment criteria in their application and should closely consider the relevant Category Descriptors (see Attachment A). The category descriptors are used by Grant Review Panel (GRP) members to score each application against each criterion. This ensures a consistent framework by which applications are scored between and within panels. Additional guidance on how to address the assessment criteria is provided at Attachment B and in the Project Grants scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants.

4.1 Additional Criteria for Indigenous Health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

These applications will be assigned to panel members with specific expertise in Indigenous health research. In scoring applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, the Indigenous assessor will use their discretion, experience and expertise to reflect the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the criteria and will closely consider the relevant Category Descriptors (Attachment C).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Indigenous health which do not meet the Indigenous health criteria will be assessed as a standard Project Grant application.

5 Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether they will be suitable or not and to apply appropriately. An exception applies for applicants who wish to apply as NI applicants. These applicants must seek confirmation of their eligibility to apply in the New Investigator category, which involves an early application and notification process (see section 5.1.4).

Project Grants have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017). Except for eligibility criteria requirements specific to NHMRC New Investigator status, which must be met at the time of the New Investigator application submission date, it is the responsibility of all CIs to ensure that they meet all other eligibility criteria at time of submission and for the duration of the peer review period to apply in the Project Grants round. RGMS has functionality available to assist applicants in determining their eligibility. However, this remains indicative only and does not replace the CI’s responsibility to confirm their eligibility.

For example, CIs on current NHMRC Grants should confirm with the CIA that no variation requests have been submitted which may affect the CI’s eligibility to apply.

5.1 Multiple Research Grant Eligibility

5.1.1 Project Grants

The maximum number of project grant applications a CI (CIA-CIJ) may submit in any year is six, less the number of NHMRC Project Grants that are scheduled to continue in the year following the year of the application. For example, if an investigator, at the time of submission holds four NHMRC Project Grants, one of which will finish at the end of the year of the application, the investigator may submit up to three applications.

Where a CI (CIA-CIJ) has submitted applications in excess of the maximum number of grants and/or applications for which she/he is eligible, all applications that include that investigator as a CI will be automatically ineligible and removed from the assessment process (refer to section 10.7 NHMRC Funding Rules). It is the responsibility of all CIs to ensure that they meet these requirements prior to submission of an application.

Note: A different requirement applies to CIs on Program Grants (please refer to subsection 5.1.2 below).
5.1.2 Program Grant applicants and grant holders

NHMRC Program Grant CIs are not permitted to hold, or apply for, more than one Project Grant.

Applicants should note that there can only be one Program Grant holder named as a CI on any Project Grant application. Program Grant CIs cannot be the only (sole) CI named on any existing Project Grant or a Project Grant application: there must be at least one other CI who is not also a CI on an awarded Program Grant or a Program Grant receiving funding in any year in which the Project Grant is funded.

This eligibility criterion applies regardless of a CI’s part-time or full-time status on the Program Grant. For further information on part-time Program Grants and Project Grant eligibility on existing grants please refer to the Program Grants scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2019.

A table summarising the NHMRC Project/Program Grant eligibility rules underpinning the eligibility criterion is at Attachment D.

5.1.3 New Investigators

The New Investigator (NI) initiative aims to support researchers who are yet to receive significant research funding through a competitive grants process. NHMRC seeks to fund NI applications at approximately the same rate as standard Project Grant applications.

All CIs on a NI application for funding must at the time of the NI application submission date:

- Be less than 10 years from the date of the letter advising them that their doctoral thesis was passed, unless career disruptions exist (see below for further details).
- Not have been a named CI (or equivalent) on a funded NHMRC research support grant and/or an ARC research support grant (e.g. Discovery Projects).
- Not have been a named CI (or equivalent) on a funded research support grant from an agency listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register or an equivalent national or international competitive funding grant totaling $AUD 250,000 or more. Note the $250,000 limit is not cumulative.

Note: An early application process applies to confirm NI eligibility, refer to subsection 5.1.4 below.

Applicants may still have held a salary-only award (Scholarship or Fellowship) from any funding source including NHMRC (e.g. NHMRC Career Development Fellowship, Early Career Fellowship Award). If applicants have received funding support that includes research and salary support, applicants must provide details of each funding component for the research and salary support (the research support component must not total $AUD 250,000 or more). Applicants must also provide justification why the applicant should be considered a NI. Applicants who fail to provide all necessary details at the time of NI application submission will not be eligible for consideration of NI status and will progress as a standard applicant in the round.

5.1.4 New Investigator Eligibility Application Process

Applicants who wish to apply as a NI must seek confirmation of their eligibility to apply in this category by 25 January 2017. The early application and notification process is intended to allow the applicant(s) time to adjust the CI team if they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

All applicants applying as a NI must complete the mandatory NI form in RGMS in the ‘Applications’ section. Applicants should clearly address the NI eligibility criteria as outlined in the form, as no additional explanatory information will be accepted once a submission has been made and the submission date has passed.

New Investigator Career Disruptions

Career disruptions can be claimed over the 10 year period only for NI eligibility assessment purposes. A career disruption claim for the assessment of Team Quality & Capability will only be considered as outlined in section 4.4 B-GP Grant Proposal of the Project Grants scheme-specific advice & instructions to applicants.

1 Includes State and Territory based awards.

6 Funding

6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Project Grants can be requested for between one and five years. Applicants are required to fully and clearly justify their requested budget on a yearly basis in order to demonstrate value for money.

The GRP will consider how the requested budget and requested duration of the grant supports the proposed outcomes of the application, and may adjust the duration and budget of the grant to ensure the project can be achieved, while ensuring value for money.

For a more detailed explanation regarding the appropriate use of NHMRC funds, Personnel Support Package (PSP) requests and how to prepare
the budget in the application, refer to the Project Grants scheme-specific advice and instructions to applicants.

For information on Project Grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

NOTE: Investigators applying for grants to be awarded by other funding bodies, for example Cancer Australia, must refer to the relevant guidelines provided by these organisations as specific conditions on the level and duration of funding and the items supported may differ. These guidelines can be found in the relevant links provided in subsection 6.2.3.

6.2 Use of Funds

6.2.1 Funding to support overseas research activities

Applicants may request funding to support specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. In doing so the applicants must clearly demonstrate that the research activity is critical to the successful completion of the project and that the equipment/resources required for the research activity are not available in Australia. In some instances applicants may conduct the majority of their work overseas. However it is important that applicants ensure that the research is well justified and conforms with the scheme eligibility requirements. For example the CIA must ensure they are based in Australia for 80 per cent (%) of the funding period.

Applicants may request funding for salary support for the specific research activities to be undertaken overseas. However, when requesting salary support for overseas activities the personnel in relation to the request may not be named as a CI.

6.2.2 Funding for Clinical Trials

A Clinical Trial and Cohort Studies Grant Review Panel will assess applications where a clinical trial or cohort study is the predominate methodology.

A clinical trial should be considered as the following:

- Study that will recruit humans or groups of humans, particularly unhealthy humans.
- The purpose of the study is to better understand human biology and/or disease.
- Participants will be prospectively assigned to one or more interventions.
- The study will have one or more health related outcomes.
- The study will have a control group and will be a controlled clinical trial.

Clinical trials may be categorised by type e.g. efficacy, effectiveness, explanatory, pragmatic, randomised.

NHMRC will only be able to fund a limited number of clinical trials and may require applicants to find co-funding as a prerequisite for NHMRC support, if the GRP determines that this is warranted.

Note: A cohort study may have characteristics of a clinical trial, however the study will not have a control group.

6.2.3 Funding by other Organisations

The NHMRC Project Grants scheme has established a number of different arrangements with Government agencies, Administering Institutions and not-for-profit organisations to support research in specific areas. These arrangements allow the funding of applications considered fundable by the GRP, in total or in part, that are beyond the limit of NHMRC funding.

Each year, NHMRC conducts the peer review of applications on behalf of these organisations to identify applications suitable for their funding. All applications are peer reviewed in the same manner. If an applicant chooses to apply for funding from NHMRC and another organisation, and the application is ranked as competitive (fundable) following NHMRC peer review, NHMRC has the first option to fund the application. Details, including peer review outcomes, of all remaining relevant applications that are considered fundable by the GRP are then provided to the funding organisation. The decision to fund the additional application/s remains with that organisation. NHMRC does not take part in this stage of the process.

Privacy will be protected in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) as outlined in section 9.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Applicants can choose to apply for funding from one or more organisations that offer funding through the NHMRC Project Grants scheme. Applications for NHMRC funding must comply with all NHMRC funding criteria. Applicants seeking funding from other organisations must also comply with any additional specified criteria or requirements from the relevant funding organisation. For information on additional funding opportunities and additional criteria that may apply, refer to Project Grants section on the NHMRC website.

Cancer Australia and Funding Partners and Cancer Councils

In 2017, applicants can choose to apply exclusively to:

- Cancer Councils
- Cancer Australia and Funding Partners
**Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Research**

Applicants who select EME funding in a Project Grant application should be aware that NHMRC, in conjunction with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), will determine if an application meets the criteria for EME funding.

Applicants are advised to review the 2010 WHO Research Agenda for Radio Frequency (RF) Fields, in particular, page 7 – Scope. Applicants are required to provide a detailed justification that their application meets the criteria for EME research and is within scope. Specifically, applicants are required to show that their project investigates the effects of RF EME on human health. In this context a description of both the RF exposure (such as frequency range and source of the exposure) and the health effect that is being investigated is required.

Applications that do not meet the WHO’s policy parameters will not be considered for EME funding.

In addition to the WHO agenda, further guidance is provided below:

People are constantly exposed to low levels of RF EME from various sources which are mainly used for telecommunications, such as:

- radio and television broadcasting
- mobile telephony
- wireless networks such as Wi-Fi
- smart meters and
- other wireless communications.

There are also other sources of varying levels of RF EME exposing people at specific situations such as:

- security and navigation applications such as millimeter wave scanners and radar
- industrial uses such as induction heating and plastic welding
- and various medical applications for imaging and therapy.

It is anticipated that sources of RF EME will increase and there is some concern in relation to potential health effects which is not fully alleviated by existing scientific data.

**7 Assessment process**

For information on the peer review process, see the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017 and Project Grants scheme-specific Peer Review Guidelines.

**7.1 External Assessments and Applicant Response**

NHMRC, through its Assigners Academy, will endeavour to seek two reviews from External Assessors for all Project Grant applications. Prior to the GRP meeting, applicants will have an opportunity to respond to the reviews provided by Spokespersons and External Assessors.

Applicant Responses must be must be uploaded into RGMS by the NHMRC deadline and must meet all size, length and formatting requirements, outlined in the NHMRC notification letter to applicants when assessor comments are available.

**8 Grant administration**

Please refer to the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and on the NHMRC website under Administering Grants.

**8.1 Reporting**

The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017.

Note that where a grant commences funding on a date other than 1 January, the annual financial and scientific reports will still be due on 30 April for the portion of the previous calendar year in which the grant was active.

**9 Attachments**

- **Attachment A** - 2017 NHMRC Project Grants Category Descriptors
- **Attachment B** - Guidance for Applications to Address the Project Grants Assessment Criteria
- **Attachment C** - 2017 NHMRC Project Grants Category Descriptors and Assessment Criteria for Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- **Attachment D** - Project/Program Grant Eligibility Rules
Research Fellowships scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2018

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Fellowships scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017
- the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2017, incorporating the Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines
- the Advice and Instructions to Applicants 2017
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. About the scheme

1.1 Description

A Research Fellowship is a five year Fellowship supporting leading health and medical researchers in full-time research.

1.2 Objectives

The Research Fellowships Scheme aims to support Australia’s very best health and medical research talent in full-time research, during the most productive years of their research life to further develop as leaders in their field and contribute to the Australian research community through active participation.

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- foster an intellectual environment which supports and builds the capacity of Australian research for the future
- create knowledge through investment in research which improves health and contributes to Australia’s prosperity.

1.3 Who should apply?

The Scheme provides support for outstanding health and medical researchers to undertake full-time research that is of major importance in its field and of significant benefit to Australian health and medical research. The Fellowship is available for researchers working in biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research areas. Applicants must be proposing to undertake their research in Australia (see NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 7.4).

Research Fellowships are open to all researchers in Australia who have a sustained track record of significant and quality research output as judged relative to opportunity.

Research Fellowships are prestigious and highly competitive awards for high performing researchers. Recipients of Research Fellowships are generally in the top 10% of their field and are viewed as ‘pushing the boundaries’ of research.

2. Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2018:

- Section 5.1 Clarification that it is expected applicants ‘will hold’ instead of ‘must hold’ a PhD
- Section 9.1 Applicants can inform NHMRC of any special considerations for their interview via a webform.
- Section 10.4 Clarification regarding parental leave.
- The requirement for professors to apply at PRF or SPRF levels and provide a justification if applying at SRF levels has been removed.
- ‘Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contributions’ text included in Attachment A: Category Descriptors.

3. Critical dates
Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5.00 pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 for further details.

4. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

1. vision for the next five years (in alignment with the aims of the scheme).
2. quality of Research Output (with particular emphasis on the past five years and demonstrating an upward trajectory) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants, translation activities and national and international profile.
3. contribution to research through research supervision, mentoring, peer review and research administration.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 6.2). For further information refer to Attachment A.

Applicants should address any other matters that they believe are relevant to the objectives of the Fellowship scheme. Applicants should describe their achievements relative to their field and opportunity.

4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 section 6.3).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria will be assessed as a standard Research Fellowship application.

5. Eligibility

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether they will be suitable.

Research Fellowships have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017).

5.1 Qualifications

It is expected that applicants will hold a PhD or equivalent research qualification. This is a qualification or experience equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013.

5.2 Time Commitment

5.2.1 Full-time Fellowships
Full-time Research Fellowships provide support for Research Fellows who are employed at 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) to engage in research. Full-time fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 0.8 FTE to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

The remaining 0.2 FTE may be spent on activities directly related to the research under the Fellowship, including clinical responsibilities, commercial activities, policy development and public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, academic or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

5.2.2 Part-time Fellowships

Part-time Fellowships are available for researchers who have either:
- parental or carer responsibilities where work time is reduced
- personal circumstances such as illness.

Part-time Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if a part-time Fellow is employed at 0.5 FTE, at least 80% (i.e. 0.4 FTE) of that time should be devoted to research. The non-fellowship time cannot be spent on other research, teaching, clinical or practitioner responsibilities, or administrative roles as identified in section 5.3 of this document.

It is important to note that these Fellowships are intended to be part-time for the duration of the Fellowship.

5.3 Other Appointments

The intent of the Research Fellowship scheme is to support full-time researchers who are leaders in their field and who are involved in the development of future research leaders through supervision and mentoring. The scheme is not designed to allow subsidy of additional appointments related to research such as Institute Director (or equivalent). The funding of these roles is the responsibility of the Institution.

A successful applicant, who in addition holds an appointment such as a full time academic teaching role, directorship of an independent Medical Research Institute, Institute or Centre under university or hospital governance, or a position as Dean, Deputy Vice-chancellor or Pro Vice-chancellor with substantial administrative responsibilities, must relinquish their additional administrative appointment before the Fellowship can commence. Similarly, a Fellow must relinquish their Fellowship if they choose to retain or take up one or more such appointments.

The substantial administrative responsibilities of these above mentioned roles are not compatible with the requirements, expected outcomes and full-time intent of a Research Fellowship.

Any additional appointments held by a Research Fellow are subject to review and clarification at any time throughout the life of the Fellowship.

5.4 Changes in Employment Circumstances

Recipients of a Research Fellowship are not entitled to receive additional salary from another full-time position in conjunction with their Research Fellowship.

Fellows are required to inform the NHMRC (refer to NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 12) if changes to their employment circumstances occur which affect their eligibility to hold a Research Fellowship. If this happens, the Research Fellowship will cease from the point when the change occurred.

5.5 Other Salaried Awards

Recipients of a Research Fellowship are not entitled to receive additional salary from another comparable Fellowship or award (e.g. Laureate Fellowship) in conjunction with their Research Fellowship. Fellows must relinquish their NHMRC Research Fellowship if they wish to take up the award providing the alternative salary.

5.6 Other Funding Sources

As part of their application, applicants must declare the source, duration and level of any funding already held for the area of research focus around which they are proposing to conduct their Research Fellowship. This includes all NHMRC funding.

This is done to ensure that funding is not duplicated by the Commonwealth or a Funding Partner. NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding.

5.7 Citizenship

For information on citizenship, refer to NHMRC Funding Rules 2017, section 7.4.

Note: applicants who are not Australian citizens (as indicated in Part PRO-PD Personal Details of their CV in RGMS) must indicate their
Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.

6. Categories of Award

There are three categories of awards as follows:

6.1 Full-time five-year Fellowships

These are available to those employed as a 1.0 FTE Research Fellow (see section 5.2.1) and are renewable in the final year of funding. Fellows may also apply for Promotion out of Synchrony (see subsection 7.4.1).

6.2 Part-time five-year Fellowships

These are available to Fellows who are unable to conduct research full-time (see subsection 5.2.2) but will devote at least 80% of their part time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

These are renewable in the final year of funding. Part-time Fellows may apply for “Promotion out of Synchrony” (see subsection 7.4.1). Applications for renewal, or for “Promotion out of Synchrony”, may be for either a full-time or part-time Fellowship. When applying for a part-time Fellowship, applicants must indicate in their application the percentage of FTE at which they will undertake their Fellowship (0.5 – 0.9 FTE). Applicants must provide their RAO with a written statement from their employer confirming their proposed FTE and the reason for this proposed FTE. This statement must be made available to NHMRC upon request at any time during the peer review process and duration of the Fellowship.

If NHMRC considers this amount of FTE is inconsistent with the aims of the scheme or the principles underpinning section 6.2, it will review the status of the Fellowship and may require its relinquishment.

A pro-rata package will be provided based on this part-time commitment.

It is important to note that while these Fellowships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time (see section 10.6).

6.3 Honorary Research Fellowships

Honorary Research Fellowships are awarded in certain circumstances when:

- a current NHMRC Australia Fellowship holder has successfully applied for a Research Fellowship, or
- a current NHMRC Research Fellow accepts an appointment to another prestigious position in health and medical research.

The following conditions apply in relation to Honorary Research Fellowships for Australia Fellowship holders:

- Applicants must be within the final two years of their Australia Fellowship at the time applications for Research Fellowships close during any period of overlap between the Australia Fellowship concluding and the Research Fellowship commencing, the Research Fellowship will be deemed to be held in an honorary capacity.
- During any period of overlap, the Research Fellowship will run concurrently with the Australia Fellowship so that time consumed while the Australia Fellowship concludes will reduce the available time and corresponding value of the Research Fellowship.

The following conditions apply in relation to Honorary Research Fellowships for those who are not Australia Fellowship holders:

- Honorary Fellowships are only available to current Research Fellowship holders
- The alternative appointment must be for the conduct of health and medical research
- The alternative appointment must be based in Australia
- The Honorary Research Fellowship cannot be held for longer than the five year period for which the Research Fellowship was originally awarded
- The Fellow must demonstrate that the aims of a non-NHMRC appointment are compatible with the aims of the Research Fellowships Scheme
- Remuneration under the Research Fellowship will not be provided by NHMRC during the term of an Honorary Research Fellowship;
- If the alternative appointment ceases before the end of the five-year Research Fellowship, the Fellow can re-enter the Research Fellowship scheme and remuneration will commence for the remainder of the Fellowship. However, the total value of the Fellowship is reduced according to the period over which it has been held in an honorary capacity
- If the duration of the other health research appointment extends beyond the expiration date of the Research Fellowship, a current Honorary Research Fellow can reapply for a Research Fellowship, but if successful, must resign from their other appointment before they can commence their new Fellowship (see section 5.3) and
- Honorary Fellowships are not available to Fellows who accept remunerated administrative, financial, academic or managerial positions, or
other positions such as those described in section 5.3.

Fellows who wish to apply for honorary status should contact their RAO at their Administering Institution for advice.

7. Types of applicants

Each year, NHMRC receives applications from current holders of NHMRC Research Fellowships, previous holders of NHMRC Research Fellowships and from researchers who have never held a Research Fellowship. All applicants are subject to the same peer review process and assessment criteria. The final ranked list is established on merit, regardless of the applicant’s previous Fellowship status. However, applicants who hold or who have previously held a NHMRC Research Fellowship should note the rules regarding their eligibility in relation to the type and level at which they apply. Selection of the incorrect type and/or level may result in an application being ineligible.

Details on types of applicants are outlined below. There are four levels of Research Fellowships: Senior Research Fellow A and B (SRFA and SRFB, jointly known as "SRF General"), Principal Research Fellow (PRF) and Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF). All applicants should carefully consider their requested application level and apply at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile. For example, applicants who hold a professorial position should consider applying at PRF or SPRF levels. Details of these four levels can be found at Attachment B.

A summary of application types and the levels which can be applied for is at Attachment C.

Applicants may only submit one application for a Research Fellowship in a funding round.

Applications will only be assessed at the level and type specified in the application.

7.1 Initial Applicants

"Initial Applications" should be submitted by applicants who have never previously held an NHMRC Research Fellowship.

7.1.1 Initial Applicants to Senior Research Fellow Level

"Initial Applications" to the Scheme can be made at any level, including Senior Research Fellow General (SRF General). SRF General applications are scored at both SRF A and SRF B levels.

7.2 Reapplications

"Reapplications" should be submitted by applicants who currently hold or have previously held a Research Fellowship. "Reapplications" cannot be made at a level lower than the applicants most recently held Research Fellowship (refer to Attachment C). "Reapplications" are assessed only at the level at which they apply.

Current Fellows must reapply in the final year of funding of their Fellowship and will not automatically be granted an interview. There is no limit to the number of times a Fellow may re-apply to the scheme.

Note: If a returning applicant submits a "Reapplication" at a level higher than their most recently held Research Fellowship, their application will be assessed only at the level at which they applied. No dual assessment of these applications will be made in relation to a previously held level.

Current Fellows who have been awarded a sixth year extension must select "Reapplication" not "Reapplication with Promotion" in their application form. A sixth year Fellow may choose to apply at a level higher than their current level. However, they will be assessed only at the level selected in their application. Such applicants will not be dual scored.

7.3 Reapplications with Promotion

"Reapplications with Promotion" should be submitted by applicants who hold a current Research Fellowship and are seeking promotion to a higher level. Promotions are usually sought in synchrony with reapplication in the final funding year of a current Fellowship; however Fellows may apply for a "Promotion out of Synchrony" (see section 7.4.1).

Current Fellows who have been awarded a sixth year extension must not select the application type, "Reapplication with Promotion" (refer to section 7.2).

Where an applicant has applied for a "Reapplication with Promotion", the decision to proceed to interview is based on whether an applicant is competitive at their current level. The promotion request will be addressed at interview and applicants will be assessed at the level of promotion sought and at the fellow’s current level. The level to be funded will be determined post interview based on final rankings. Applicants will be awarded a Fellowship at the highest level at which they are considered competitive within available funding.

7.3.1 Promotions Out of Synchrony

Applications for "Promotion out of Synchrony" can be made by a current Fellow, in years two or three of the current five year Research
Fellowship. Promotions will not be considered in years one or four of a current Fellowship.

Periods of suspension (see section 10.2) do not contribute to Fellowship time and cannot be included as part of actual Fellowship time that has elapsed. For example, if a Fellow takes a twelve month suspension at the end of the second year of their Fellowship and returns at the beginning of the fourth year, they would be eligible to apply for “Promotion out of Synchrony”. They would be in the third year of their Fellowship, even though four calendar years had elapsed since it commenced.

“Promotions out of Synchrony” will not be considered for current Fellowships held in an honorary capacity.

Applicants who are successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” must relinquish their current Fellowship and commence a new five year Fellowship at the promoted level. Applicants who are not successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” will continue at their existing level for the remainder of their current Fellowship.

All applications for “Promotion out of Synchrony” must be submitted as part of the annual cycle of Research Fellowship applications.

7.4 Sixth Year Extensions

Sixth Year Extensions will not be offered to new Fellows for funding commencing from 2016 onwards. However, NHMRC recognises that a transitional period is required for Fellowships that commenced in 2015 or earlier.

Fellows in the final year of a Fellowship for which funding commenced in 2015 or earlier, who are unsuccessful with their reapplication, will be recommended for a sixth year of funding at their current level. However, if such an application receives an overall score of less than five at any stage of the peer review process, a sixth year extension will not be granted.

Note: Decisions in relation to the granting of Sixth Year Extensions are based on the merits of the current application and funding policy.

8. Funding

For information on the number of Research Fellowship grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the NHMRC website.

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

The four Research Fellowship levels in increasing order of experience and seniority are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lowest to Highest Designation</th>
<th>Package Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Research Fellow A</td>
<td>RF Package 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Research Fellow B</td>
<td>RF Package 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Research Fellow</td>
<td>RF Package 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Principal Research Fellow</td>
<td>RF Package 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each level provides a salary package for five years. This package is based on the percentage of time nominated at application and will be pro-rata adjusted for part-time Fellowships. Salary package amounts, per annum, can be found on the NHMRC website.

Applicants, who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship, are expected to commence their Fellowship on 1 January of the first year of the award.

8.2 Use of Funds

The Fellowship funding package is provided to assist with employing the fellow. The actual level of remuneration received by a fellow is agreed through negotiation between the fellow and their employing institution. Refer to section 5.3 for other appointments that may affect an applicant’s ability to accept a Research Fellowship.

The level of this package will apply for the duration of the Fellowship. With the exception of annual indexation, no additional funds will be provided.

8.3 Additional Fellowship benefits

Applicants may be awarded additional benefits as follows:

8.3.1 Translation Advancement Incentive
Fellows who are active in or commencing translating research outcomes into improved health practice or policy, or to commercialise research discoveries may apply for additional funding via a Translation Advancement Incentive (TAI), previously known as a Support Enhancement Option (SEO).

The TAI is designed to help bridge the gap between health research and health practice or policy, or between health research and commercial or industry developments. The activity to be funded by the TAI must extend beyond the regular research activities undertaken by the applicant, with clear evidence of commencement as a separate and discrete activity.

For Research Fellowships, the TAI is $15,000 per annum for five years, in addition to the base Research Fellowship Package. For part-time Fellowships, this amount will be adjusted in accordance with the FTE of the part-time Fellowship.

Two categories of TAI are available – Health Practice or Industry. Applicants may apply for a TAI in one category only. An application for a TAI cannot be made during an existing Fellowship. An application for a TAI can only be made when applying for a new five year Fellowship.

A Health Practice TAI is available to Fellows who can demonstrate that their activities will support the translation of research outcomes into practice and/or policy. Applicants need not have medical or dental qualifications.

An Industry TAI is available to Fellows who can demonstrate that their activities will result in sustained research and development links with industry to support translation of their research into commercial products or applications.

Industry TAI applicants must secure an industry/commercial partner and as part of the application, include a letter of support from the industry/commercial partner. The letter must demonstrate how the industry/commercial partner will be involved in supporting the translation of the applicant’s research into commercial products or applications.

A TAI is not a “clinical loading”. The TAI must be used to pay for critical resources such as part-time staff to facilitate development or implementation of health practice or commercial translation activities. For example, to pay for a business manager to facilitate negotiations with a devices company. TAI funds cannot be used for Direct Research Costs or travel.

The following evaluation factors will be considered when assessing an application for a TAI:
- The applicant has provided evidence that the research has advanced past the basic research phase
- The applicant has provided an action plan outlining the health practice or commercialisation activity (translational activities) that is being undertaken, and evidence that it has commenced
- The applicant has provided justification about how additional funding will assist with implementing translational activities
- The proposed translational activities are achievable within the duration of the Fellowship.

The Peer Review Panel will consider applications for a TAI as part of the peer review of each application at interview and make a recommendation to NHMRC’s Research Committee on its award. TAI requests failing to address the evaluation factors will not be awarded.

**TAI Reporting Requirements**

All Fellows who receive a TAI must provide a report at the conclusion of the Fellowship as part of the Final Report. These reports should detail current progress/status of all translational activities as outlined in their original TAI request and must be emailed to postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au

**Payment of existing Support Enhancement Option for Sixth Year Extensions**

Fellows in the fifth year of a Fellowship which included an SEO component, for which funding commenced in 2015 or earlier, who were unsuccessful with their reapplication, will continue to receive their SEO payment for the sixth year extension of their award.

**8.3.2 Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships**

Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships recognise one of Australia’s Nobel Laureates, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn. The Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships were established to promote and foster the career development of female researchers and are awarded annually to the highest ranked, funded female applicant in each of the biomedical, clinical and public health pillars of the Research Fellowship scheme. Applicants do not need to apply for this award. This award does not provide any additional funding to the Research Fellowship package.

**8.3.3 Research Grant Support**

Applicants must either have already obtained financial support for their research activity or have an application pending. Applicants are encouraged to have research grant support from both the NHMRC and other external funding bodies. Research grant support from NHMRC is available through a variety of schemes, for example Program Grants, Project Grants and Partnership Projects. Information regarding NHMRC funding schemes is available on the NHMRC website under Apply for funding. Applicants should refer to the scheme-specific funding rules to confirm any conditions or provisions in relation to payment of salary.

**9. Assessment process**
9.1 Interviews

Applicants who have been invited to participate in an interview must make themselves available for their interview at the time and date nominated by NHMRC. All interviews will be conducted by telephone and will be scheduled to commence 22 May 2017. The interview schedule will not be altered after the advice specifying interview times has been sent to applicants. Where an applicant is planning travel overseas during the period of interviews, or has a disability that would affect their participation in a telephone interview, they should advise NHMRC via the webform no later than COB 15 March 2017 so that suitable times or arrangements can be agreed. Whilst every effort is made to consider different time zones, it may not always be possible to schedule the interview within business hours of the relevant time zone.

Note: If an applicant is invited to interview, they must accept the invitation by submitting a suitable contact phone number to be used for their interview. If contact details are not received by NHMRC by the nominated date (to be advised at time of initial review outcomes), NHMRC will assume the applicant has declined the invitation for interview and the application may be withdrawn.

Additional information pertaining to an application will not be accepted nor provided to the panel at any time during the peer review process.

10. Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Research Fellowship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, sections 12.3 and 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and on the NHMRC website.

10.1 Variations

Requests to vary the terms of a Research Fellowship should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation Portal and through the RAO of your Administering Institution. Additional information can be found at section 12.5 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017 and on the NHMRC website.

10.2 Suspension of Research Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Research Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including pregnancy, major illness and carer responsibilities including parental leave. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension, and payments will be deferred until after the period of suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension (see section 12.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2016 for further information).

10.3 Suspension of Research Fellowships for Professional Reasons

Research Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship if they take up the position of Interim Director of an institute. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension i.e. one or two years and payments will be deferred until after the period of suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension (refer to section 12.6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2016 for further information).

The Fellow will need to demonstrate that the role of the new position is consistent with the aim of the Research Fellowship Scheme which is to support researchers in full-time research during the most productive years of their research life. The Fellow must indicate that the intention is to return to the scheme on a full-time basis to complete the Fellowship.

10.4 Parental Leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the Fellow’s Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the Fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their Fellowship (see section 10.2).

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.5 Request to reduce time commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that for a period of time, the need for a Fellow to
continue in a full-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Full-time Fellows may apply to undertake a period of their award on a part-time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support, as outlined in subsection 5.2.2.

In all cases where part-time status is approved, the duration of the Fellowship will be extended to compensate for the part-time period. Remuneration will be adjusted pro-rata for the part-time period.

10.6 Request to increase time commitment

While part-time Research Fellowships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time. Where a request to convert to full-time is approved, the remaining part-time portion of the Fellowship will be converted to the full-time equivalent of that part-time rate, i.e. if 3 years remain on a Fellowship held at 0.5 FTE, it will be converted to 1.5 years full-time.

10.7 Reporting

Refer to the NHMRC website for information regarding reporting requirements.

11. Attachments

Attachment A - Research Fellowships Category Descriptors (PDF, 76KB)
Attachment B - Statement of Expectations (PDF, 20KB)
Attachment C - Summary of Research Fellowship application types and corresponding levels which can be applied for (PDF, 21KB)

Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) Scheme-specific funding rules for funding commencing in 2017

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) GACD scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the NHMRC Funding Rules
- the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the NHMRC Funding Rules before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1 About the scheme

1.1 Description

Together with other GACD member agencies, the NHMRC is inviting investigators to submit applications for research into the prevention and management of mental disorders in low and middle income countries (LMICs) and Indigenous communities in high income countries.

Members of the GACD include the:

- NHMRC
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS)
- Research & Innovation Directorate-General of the European Commission (EC)
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- National Institutes of Health in the United States of America (NIH)
- Medical Research Council, UK (MRC)
- South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)
- Mexico's National Institute of Medical Science and Nutrition Salvador Zubiran (INCMNSZ)
- Japan's Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED)
- Argentina's Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT)
- Brazil's São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

This request for applications reflects the following principles of the GACD:
commitment to improving health gains while reducing health disparities in LMICs.

focus on research topics where the need for evidence to inform policy, programs and practice is most urgent.

pursuit of knowledge translation and exchange approaches that are designed to maximise the public health benefits of research findings.

identification of common approaches for implementation, integration and scaling up within different health service delivery systems.

It is expected that learning from individual projects will provide evidence that will support local decision making. Cumulative learning across funded projects is expected to provide a basis for evidence-informed recommendations for national and international organisations.

1.2 Objectives

This Request For Applications (RFA) will focus on implementation research proposals on child, adolescent and adult age onset mental disorders including, but not limited to, dementia, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, alcohol and drug use disorders, etc., in LMICs and Indigenous communities in high income countries.

Mental health is an integral part of health as underlined in the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.

Mental disorders cause tremendous suffering for individuals, families, communities and societies both globally and in Australia. Consistent with the principles of the GACD, the NHMRC encourages applicants to collaborate with, and participate in, international research. Research based in other GACD member countries should be submitted to the relevant agency.

Applicants are required to outline the benefit of the research to Australia in their research proposal. The NHMRC encourages applications that address Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health.

Implementation science is the focus for this call. Proposals must address what works, for whom, and under what contextual circumstances, and whether the intervention(s) are adaptable and scalable in ways that are accessible and equitable.

Implementation of effective management approaches in LMICs and Indigenous communities in Australia and other countries are influenced and sometimes hampered by socioeconomic and contextual factors that affect access to care.

The objectives of this funding opportunity are to strengthen the evidence base for the contextual scalability of interventions of promising or proven effectiveness for the promotion of mental health and the early identification and management of people at risk of or living with a mental disorder, taking into account the needs of different population groups across the life course.

For the purposes of this RFA, eligible LMICs are by definition of the World Bank.

The GACD aims to develop a network of researchers that can enhance cumulative learning across individual projects, and work towards understanding how socioeconomic, cultural, geopolitical and policy contexts have influenced results and how findings might be adapted and applied in different settings. The funded researchers will form part of a network which will meet annually to discuss their research and share information and data in order to develop approaches to standardise data collection, and wherever feasible to use these standardised approaches in their respective projects.

Attendance at these annual meetings for at least two team members must be included in the proposed budget.

Scope:

Proposals must focus on mental disorders as defined by the WHO and must focus on implementation research in LMICs, and Indigenous communities in Australia or other countries. Proposals must build on interventions with promising or proven effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness) for the respective population groups under defined contextual circumstances. Interventions that address gender-associated risk factors and vulnerability to mental disorders or differences in access, utilisation, or responsiveness to care should also be considered.

The aim should be to answer key research questions about the adaption, and/or scale up of these intervention(s) in accessible, affordable and equitable ways in order to improve the prevention and management of mental disorders in the community in health care, psychosocial, and public health/community-based programs, and other settings. Interventions should meet conditions and requirements of the local health and social system context and address any other contextual factors identified as possible barriers.

Where economic factors prevent access to effective, low-cost appropriate medication and other management and/or treatment modalities, proactive policy and strategies should be encouraged to ensure the availability of such medication or other management/treatment modality or means should be found to overcome these barriers.

Each proposal should incorporate the following elements of implementation science as appropriate:

- focus on implementation research addressing prevention, and/or early identification and/or management strategies derived from existing evidence of effective interventions
- include a strategy to test the proposed model of implementation and to address the socioeconomic and contextual factors of relevance to the targeted region and community
- consider potential ripple effects of the intervention on a number of health and other outcomes where appropriate.
lead to better understanding of key barriers and facilitators at local, or regional, or national or international level that affect the prevention and management of mental disorders

include health economic assessments as an integral part of the proposed research, including considerations of scalability and equity

propose a pathway to embed the intervention into policy and practice addressing:

- the inclusion of policy makers and local authorities (possibly by being part of the applicant team), as well as other relevant stakeholders such as community groups, patient groups, formal and informal carers and any other group, wherever relevant from the conceptualisation phase of the project, which will contribute to the potential scalability and sustainability of the intervention, after the end of project
- relevance of project outcomes/evidence for scaling up of the intervention at local, regional, national and international level, where relevant, and appropriateness and responsiveness with respect to the local social, cultural and economic context
- aspects of stigmatisation as well as potential equity gaps e.g. due to gender or age, where appropriate.

Proposals must address one, or a combination of the following items:

- structural interventions or evidence-based policies designed to equitably improve mental health outcomes
- early case detection and other secondary or tertiary prevention strategies as well as modalities of treatment, care and access to care which are amenable to scale-up. Prevention, early identification and treatment may include validated pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, psychosocial support and other approaches of relevance to mental disorders such as accessibility to and enhancing compliance with the intervention, also considering cultural context. Wherever relevant, comorbidities and their impacts on prevention and treatment strategies should be taken into account
- strategies and approaches to empower and engage patients, formal and informal care-givers in patient treatment and care exploring the scale-up of family/community engagement in patient treatment and care.

Expected Impact: (one of, or combinations of)

- advance prevention strategies and implementation of mental health interventions, alleviating global burden of mental disorders
- establish the contextual effectiveness of mental health intervention(s), including at health systems level
- improve tailored prevention and treatment; develop affordable management and treatment modalities for mental disorders and expand access to care
- inform health service providers, policy and decision makers on effective scaling up of mental health interventions at local, national and regional levels, including affordability aspects for users and health providers
- reduce health inequalities and inequities, including due consideration of gender and age issues where relevant, in the prevention, treatment and care of mental disorders at both local and global levels
- maximise the use of existing relevant programs and platforms (e.g. research, data, and delivery platforms)

The GACD aims to coordinate research on chronic diseases at a global level in order to enhance knowledge exchange across individual projects, and to better understand the impact of socioeconomic, cultural, geopolitical and policy factors on the effectiveness and scalability of interventions, so as to appropriately adapt health interventions to different geographical, economic and cultural settings. Research under GACD involves regular exchange of research findings and information across participating projects by means of cross-project working groups and annual joint meetings.

Common Indicators

The GACD funding agencies aim to harmonise the research and outcomes assessment of GACD funded projects in order to maximise the potential for learning across the network and the impact of the initiative as a whole. To this end, all funded teams are expected to use explicit indicators and measures of project context, reach, outcomes evaluation and scale-up potential in their plans and protocols. More information and examples of implementation research and outcomes indicators can be found on the GACD website.

1 Mental and behavioural disorders (FOO-F99) of WHO’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10): http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/V
2 http://www.who.int/topics/sustainable-development-goals/targets/en/
3 http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/meetings/2015/global-action-against-dementia/en/
5 http://www.gacd.org/funding/calls-for-proposals/mental-health

2 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes to the GACD scheme-specific Funding Rules for 2017.
The topic of this Request for Applications (RFA) is the prevention and management of mental disorders in low and middle income countries (LMICs) and Indigenous communities in high income countries.

3 Critical dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2017</td>
<td>Applications open in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 February 2017</td>
<td>Minimum data due in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 March 2017</td>
<td>Applications close in RGMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated June 2017</td>
<td>Not for Further Consideration stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated September 2017</td>
<td>International joint grant review panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Late-2017</td>
<td>Earliest date for funding announcement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to section 11 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for further details.

Minimum data must be entered in Research Grants Management System (RGMS) by 5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on the specified due date to allow the NHMRC to start sourcing suitable assessors. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants are also reminded to complete the recommended fields below with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data for the NHMRC/GACD RFA consist of the following:

- A-PA Application Properties (General): specifically the Administering Institution, Application Title, Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research and Synopsis
- A-RC Research Classification
- A-RT Research Team: including the names of team members if known (note: team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of applications at 5pm on 1 March 2017).

Please note: Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules for further information).

Please note: Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data; applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission (see section 10.4 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and section 6 of the NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants).

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by 5pm AEDT on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

4 Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed by peers on whether they meet the scheme objectives using the following Assessment Criteria, which are weighted equally. In framing applications against the Assessment Criteria, applicants should consider how the proposal will address the associated points.

Relevance and Quality of Project (25%)

Proposal fits well within the objectives and scientific remit set out in the call.
There is a strong scientific rationale for pursuing the questions or gaps in knowledge that are being addressed. Success is likely to lead to significant new understanding that is relevant for scientists and knowledge users. Applicants are aware of complementary research underway elsewhere.
Proposed methods are appropriate and feasible to answer the study question(s) and are considered best in the international field of implementation science research.
Proposal is innovative.
Intervention has been adequately described.
Relevant system barriers (health care and other sectors) to implementation of the interventions have been taken into account.
Ethical issues have been considered.

Quality of Team (25%)

Multidisciplinary team members have established a high quality track record in related fields of proposed research and pertinent to
implementation science and they have the right balance of expertise given goal(s) of the research project. The research is jointly managed by researchers from high-income countries and LMICs where applicable. Early career investigators are part of the team and a strong training plan for research capacity-building is included.

Stakeholders such as decision-makers and service delivery partners have been actively involved in the research process including the selection and adaptation of the intervention, if applicable, and of the research design. There is demonstrable engagement with the public and/or patient and community groups or other relevant stakeholder groups.

Feasibility of Project (25%)

Major scientific, technical or organisational challenges have been identified, and realistic plans to tackle them are outlined. Proposed intervention strategies are relevant to the socio-political, cultural, policy and economic contexts of the study settings and proposal demonstrates understanding of the contextual factors (e.g. health systems, intersectoral policy, governance, leadership) affecting implementation, indicating how those factors and their impact will be analysed.

Inequities and equity gaps, including sex and gender, have been taken into account.

Appropriate measures of evaluation have been included. Programs that are able to track long-term clinical, public health, policy and/or health system outcomes are strongly encouraged.

Potential Impact (25%)

Project demonstrates alignment with international and/or national commitments.

Project appropriately leverages existing programs and platforms (e.g. research, data, delivery platforms) if relevant.

The potential for scaling up intervention strategies has been considered, including a clear proposed pathway to embedding the intervention into policy and practice that includes:

- evidence that outcomes/evidence is utilised for the scaling up of the intervention on a local, regional, national and/or international level
- evidence that future scaled-up implementations will fit within or are adaptable to the local health systems (and/or other sectors), as well as within the social, cultural, political, economic, policy and regulatory context (for example, applicants could address affordability for users and the financial implications for implementing organisations and funders or might assess scalability to various socio-political contexts)
- consideration for socio-economic determinants of health, equity gaps and sex and gender issues are taken into account in adapting the intervention and implementation strategy.

There is evidence that health economic dimensions and scalability will be assessed.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity; taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 and 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

4.1 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Additional Criteria

The Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (AATSIHS) collected information on positive well-being in 2012-13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were found to be almost three times more likely to feel high or very high levels of psychological distress than non-Indigenous adults.\(^1\)

In 2013-14, there were 16,070 hospitalisations with a main diagnosis of ‘mental and behavioural disorders’ that were identified as Indigenous (‘mental and behavioural disorders’ occur when a person becomes unwell in the mind and experiences changes in their thinking, feelings and/or behaviour that affects their day-to-day life). For 2006-2010, there were 312 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths from ‘mental and behavioural disorders’.\(^2\)

With these facts in mind, and consistent with GACD principles, NHMRC will encourage applications that address Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health, within this RFA.

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health must also address the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (see section 6.3 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

Further information on how these criteria are assessed is provided under section 7 ‘Selection Process’.

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5 Eligibility

GACD has eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met (see section 10.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

Applications seeking funding under the NHMRC/GACD RFA should note the following:

5.1 Chief Investigator A Based in Australia

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) must be based in Australia. Where the work will be mainly carried out in low and middle income countries, it would be expected at least one Chief Investigator (other than CIA) on the application will be from the country where the work will take place.

5.2 Multiple Grant Eligibility

Applicants are free to hold, or apply for, other NHMRC grants during the period of funding offered under this call (subject to any limits set for holding grants in other NHMRC funding schemes). However, the time commitments of the Chief Investigators will be carefully considered in the review of the application.

5.3 Duplicate Applications

Duplicate applications or applications with substantial overlap submitted to one or more participating GACD member agencies will not be permitted in this RFA. Duplicate applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered further.

In order to verify that applications have not been submitted to more than one funding agency or that there is not significant overlap between applications submitted, the partnering GACD organisations and listed partners will share the applications.

6 Funding

6.1 Level and Duration of Funding

NHMRC has allocated a total of $4.75 million for this RFA. Duration of successful grants will be for five years or less.

6.2 Use of Funds

6.2.1 Salary Support for Chief Investigators and Other Personnel

Applications to NHMRC for funding as part of this NHMRC/GACD RFA may include salary support for Chief Investigators, based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). These requests must be justified in the proposed budget as being directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research.

The application may seek salary support for one or more Chief Investigators based in the relevant LMIC. Salaries for other research staff must only be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). For PSPs requested for team members local to LMICs, requests should reflect the rate of pay relevant to that country.

Associate Investigators are not permitted to draw salary from an NHMRC grant.

6.2.2 Direct Research Costs

NHMRC will only fund the direct costs of the research proposal. For more information, applicants should refer to section 8 of the NHMRC Funding Rules and the NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines.

Direct Research Costs may include support, other than salary, for Chief Investigators based in the relevant LMIC.

6.2.3 Travel Costs

Applicants must budget for the costs of having two team members participate in one annual face-to-face meeting of the GACD Research Network (location to vary annually). Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for two team members, with at least one participant from the LMIC team where relevant. Teams are strongly encouraged to include one junior team member in each annual meeting.

Travel costs associated with the conduct of field research and GACD meetings including GACD Research Network (GRN) meetings are permissible in the budget proposal as Direct Research Costs. Requests for these funds must be fully justified in the application.
7 Selection process

This RFA is being conducted in a two-stage assessment process consisting of an initial Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) stage, reviewed by an NHMRC Grant Review Panel, with non-NFFC applications proceeding to a joint international review panel.

For the NFFC stage, NHMRC will establish a Grant Review Panel to evaluate the merit of applications. Each application will be allocated a Primary and Secondary Spokesperson (1SP & 2SP) who will score it against the assessment criteria (see section 4) using the NHMRC Category Descriptors. Applicants will have an opportunity to respond (rebuttal) to the reviews provided by the 1SP and 2SP who may then revise their scores.

The least competitive applications, bottom 50%, based on the revised scores provided by the 1SP and 2SP will be added to a NFFC list.

Applications may be excluded from the list in the following circumstances:
- Applications deemed to relate specifically to the health of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples that score Category 4 or higher after initial assessment will proceed to full discussion at the joint International Grant Review Panel (GRP) meeting. These applications will not be included in the NFFC list regardless of whether they fall within the lowest 50% of applications.
- Where NHMRC receives more than 15 applications, a maximum of 15 applications will proceed to full review provided their initial scores do not place them in Category 3 or below.
- Where NHMRC receives fewer than 15 applications, all applications will proceed to full review except for those that score a Category 3 or below after initial assessment.

A maximum of 15 applications will proceed to the international review described at section 7.1.

7.1 GACD Joint International Review Panel

Following the NHMRC NFFC process, non-NFFC applications will be reviewed by a joint panel of international peers selected by participating GACD agencies, established specifically for this RFA.

This GRP will assess and rank the applications received under this call and include researchers from relevant disciplines. The GRP will review full applications using the assessment criteria as described in section 4.

The GRP will:
- review the applications against the advertised assessment criteria
- ensure applications which address Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health and medical research issues have been assessed against the assessment criteria taking into account the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria
- rank applications.

The GRP will submit funding recommendations for Australian applications to the NHMRC. Following the GRP meeting, NHMRC will:
- review budgets of applications recommended for funding
- provide a ranked list of applications with recommendations for funding
- provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

NHMRC will seek the advice of its Research Committee and Council prior to the NHMRC CEO making funding recommendations to the Minister for Health and Aged Care.

The joint panel will individually assess the applications of each participating agency and make its recommendations based on its judgement about the overall merits of each application against the advertised assessment criteria (as described in section 4).

7.2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Assessment Process

Applications with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander focus or involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander populations will be assessed against the assessment criteria (as described in section 4), and must also address the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria. These applications will be assessed against the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria by an external assessor with expertise both in science and in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health research. This assessment will be provided to advise the GRP.

8 Grant administration

Administrative obligations and processes specific to GACD awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement and section 12 of the NHMRC Funding Rules.

8.1 Reporting
The requirements for financial and scientific reporting are as described in section 12.7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules.