

MEDICAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM

APPLICATION GUIDELINES &
PROGRAM DETAILS

Funding round: 2016 – 2020



Health

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Call for Applications

The NSW Ministry of Health invites eligible organisations to apply for funding under the 2016-2020 funding round of the Medical Research Support Program (MRSP 2016-2020). This document provides information about the application requirements and submission process for MRSP 2016-2020.

How to submit an application

All applications must be submitted on the Standard Application Form which is available from the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR) website <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/mrsp>. The purpose of this form is to enable applicants to provide information in a consistent format.

Applicants should submit one electronic copy of their application and **six** hard copies of the application for funding in the requested format.

Each copy of the application for funding should include a:

- completed *Standard Application Form*, with all supporting evidence (e.g. most recent annual report) attached as separate documents and clearly labelled
- completed *Grant Income Spreadsheet (Appendix C)*
- copy of the applicant's most recent audited financial statement
- signed *Letter of Declaration (Appendix A)*

OHMR requires all hard copies to be formally lodged (i.e. in person, signed courier or registered post), and sent –

By mail to:

Ms Lorelei Brealey
Principal Policy Officer
Office for Health and Medical Research
NSW Ministry of Health
LMB 961NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

OR

In person/by courier to:

Ms Lorelei Brealey
Principal Policy Officer
Office for Health and Medical Research
NSW Ministry of Health
73 Miller St
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

The electronic copy should be emailed to:

ohmr@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Both electronic and hard copy applications must be received by COB (5:00pm) **Wednesday 17 February 2016**.

Queries about the application process

Enquiries may be directed to: Jocelyne Aldridge, jaldr@doh.health.nsw.gov.au or Tel. (02) 9461 7054.

Introduction and Program Details

What is MRSP?

The Medical Research Support Program (MRSP) is a funding program providing infrastructure support to independent Medical Research Institutes in NSW. MRSP has been operating in its current form since 2003, and this funding is:

- For infrastructure purposes only, MRSP funding cannot be used to fund research projects or capital works
- Allocated against research grant success (National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) peer-reviewed grants)
- Awarded for a 4-year period, with a mid-term review to re-calculate funding allocations for the second term, in line with grant success
- Administered by the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR), part of the NSW Ministry of Health.

MRSP: purpose and objectives

The purpose of MRSP is to support state-wide capacity to deliver world class health and medical research through the provision of funding for research infrastructure. It is estimated that for every dollar in research funding received, an additional 60-80 cents is needed to cover indirect costs, depending on the type of research. MRSP is the major source of infrastructure funding for independent Medical Research Institutes in NSW.

The objectives of MRSP are to:

- Support excellence in health and medical research and the delivery of quality outputs
- Promote critical mass in health and medical research as part of the effective use of resources
- Monitor and help ensure the financial sustainability of participating institutes.

MRSP 2016-2020: who can apply?

To be eligible for funding from MRSP 2016-2020, applicants must be:

1. A Medical Research Institute located in NSW.
2. Conducting health and medical research* as its primary business.

3. An independent and discrete operational entity, able to demonstrate sufficient independence to determine its own research directions and use of funds.
4. A member of at least one of NSW's nine health and medical research Hubs.
5. Conducting high quality research at a sufficient scale, with an average annual research income from eligible grants of at least \$3 million. This average is based on income for the previous three years.**
6. Able to demonstrate that they have sufficient existing capacity to support future growth (evidence includes: audited accounts to demonstrate financial viability, with a liquidity ratio of 1.0 or more, and a low level of debt).

*This includes biomedical, clinical, public health, and operational research (such as research on health services, primary health care and health policy) as well as research on the social determinants of health.

**Any research income declared in the MRSP application may not also be declared in any future Population Health and Health Services Research Support (PHHSRS) Program funding applications.

For more details on who is eligible for MRSP 2016-2020, please refer to the eligibility criteria (page 6-7).

MRSP is not available to:

- *Affiliations of convenience:* weakly affiliated research groups that represent themselves as aggregate entities solely for the purpose of fulfilling the criteria for funding under the Program.
- *Organisations that facilitate research:* research communities representing themselves as research organisations or consortia.
- *Controlled entities or units of other organisations:* research groups which have universities or health services as their parent entity.

MRSP 2016-2020: allocation of available funding

Funding under the current round of the MRSP will run from July 2016 to June 2020, with a capped pool of funding available over the four years of the Program. There will be two terms within the funding period 2016 – 2018 and 2018- 2020. Funding allocations will be determined for each institute at the start of the program, and again at the mid-term review in 2018.

Allocating funding

Allocations will be calculated using institutes' average annual NHMRC grant income, based on the previous three years (2013-2015 for Term 1 and 2015-2017 for Term 2), as reported by institutes using

Appendix C.

Institutes will receive between 30c and 45c/\$ support, determined by tier allocation and subject to available funds within a capped pool of funding. Where institutes with a previous three year average annual ACGR grant income greater than:

- \$15 million = Tier 1
- \$10 million = Tier 2
- \$3 million = Tier 3.

Applicant organisations will also be required to state whether they expect to receive other NSW Government infrastructure funding during the current MRSP grant period (2016-2020). When allocating funds, other sources of infrastructure funding will be taken into consideration. MRSP allocations may be adjusted if a successful applicant is also a recipient of the:

- Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program
- Cancer Institute NSW infrastructure funding
- Other NSW Government sources of infrastructure funding.

It is anticipated that applicant organisations will attract some additional research infrastructure funding from non-NSW Government sources through associated universities and/or NHMRC Independent Research Institutes Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIIS) funding. The size of the grant awarded to eligible organisations under the MRSP will not be influenced by funding from these sources attracted by applicant organisations.

Payment of grants

Payment of grants awarded under the MRSP will be made directly to the applicant organisation. During term 1 (2016-18) participating institutes will receive six instalments each of equal amounts, based on the initial assessment. During term 2 of the program (2018-2020) participating institutes will receive a further six instalments, based on the assessment at the mid-term review.

MRSP 2016-2020: indicative program timeline

Activity	Date
Call for Applications	11 December 2015
Applications close	17 February 2016
Announcement of successful applicants	June 2016
Funding commences	July 2016
Mid-term review	February 2018
Funding ends	June 2020

Selection Process

Step 1: Initial eligibility appraisal

Following the closing date for applications, the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR) at the NSW Ministry of Health will make an appraisal as to whether or not each applicant has satisfied all of the eligibility criteria. The OHMR may request further information from applicants in order to clarify or confirm statements and other material contained in the application.

Step 2: Independent review of applications

An Independent Review Panel will review OHMR's initial appraisals. The Panel will be chaired by the Director, OHMR, and include the Chief Financial Officer, Ministry of Health and three independent members including a minimum of one interstate member.*

Step 3: Recommendations to the minister

The Panel will then make recommendations to the Minister for Medical Research on which applicants should enter the program and the proposed funding allocation for the first term of the program (2016 – 2018).

Step 4: Successful applicants announced

Once the Minister for Medical Research has approved the Panel's recommendations, all applicants will be informed in writing of the results. As a thorough due diligence and transparent process will take place, the Minister's decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Step 5: Funding agreements initiated

The Office for Health and Medical Research will then make contact with successful applicants to establish funding agreements.

*Permission for the exchange of information contained within the application is required (Appendix A)

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for funding under the MRSP, organisations must demonstrate that they meet all six eligibility criteria in their application. All information provided on the applicant's activities and finances must be attributable to the applicant as a discrete entity and should not be claimable by another organisation.

For successful applicants, the information provided in relation to criterion five will also inform the level of funding they are allocated.

1. Located in NSW

The applicant organisation must be located in NSW.

2. Health and medical research is the primary purpose of the organisation

The primary purpose of the applicant organisation must be to deliver health and medical research. This does not exclude organisations which carry out other activities such as teaching and consultancy work that are secondary to the research function. However, it does exclude organisations for which research is a subsidiary function, e.g. pharmaceutical companies which are established primarily to manufacture and sell pharmaceutical products.

Evidence of the applicant organisation's primary purpose may include its mission statement and annual report.

3. Organisational independence

The applicant organisation must be a discrete operational entity with independent management and governance structures and processes, demonstrated by evidence of:

- Legal recognition of the applicant organisation as a discrete operational entity
- Independent Board or equivalent governing body which is not legally controlled by a University, Local Health District, Specialty Network and/or public or private health care facility
- Organisational mechanisms to determine its own research direction and strategy, including a Director with clear responsibilities regarding the applicant organisation's research directions and activities

- Identifiable infrastructure and overall organisational budgets and control over how funds are spent, including externally audited financial statements
- An intellectual property policy that is congruent with the National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research (NHMRC, 2001).

The Standard Application Form includes suggestions of the types of documentation that may provide evidence of the above.

4. Membership of a NSW health and medical research hub

The applicant organisation must have formal membership of one of the following designated NSW Medical Research Hubs:

- Sydney Central
- Darlinghurst Hub
- Health Science Alliance (South Eastern Sydney)
- North Sydney Academic Health Sciences Centre
- Westmead Hub
- South Western Sydney Research
- Southern Health Research Alliance
- Hunter Hub
- Rural and Remote Research Network.

To demonstrate membership, applicants will need to provide a Memorandum of Understanding, Constitution documentation, letter of affiliation or other formal documentation. Hub membership will be confirmed with nominated Hub leaders.

5. Conducting high quality research at a sufficient scale

The applicant organisation must be conducting high quality research at a sufficient scale, as evidenced by an average annual research income of at least \$3 million. To demonstrate that the organisation meets the minimum threshold, applicants will be asked to provide information on their research income from eligible peer-reviewed competitive research grants for the previous three calendar years.

Any research income declared in the MRSP application may not also be declared in any future Population Health and Health Services Research Support (PHHSRS) Program funding applications.

The Standard Application Form requires applicant organisations to provide:

- Dollar values of grant amounts allocated to the applicant organisation for 2013, 2014 and 2015, where 'allocated' refers to bankable income, NOT the total grant amount awarded. For example, if in 2014 an organisation is awarded a grant of \$90,000 but it is allocated over three years with \$60,000 allocated in 2014, \$15,000 in 2015 and \$15,000 in 2016; then only \$60,000 is reported for 2014 NOT \$90,000.
- An indication of which grants are shared with other organisations, claiming ONLY the dollar amount for the proportion of the grant that is allocated to the applicant organisation and where the organisation has provided the primary research infrastructure support.

Eligible grants are listed in the 2015 Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR), included as **Appendix B**. This list includes peer-reviewed research grants awarded by the National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and other funding bodies of an equivalent competitive standard.

Please note that the following sources of income are not eligible for inclusion:

- Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs)
- Peer-reviewed equipment grants
- PhD and other student research scholarships
- NHMRC Independent Research Institute Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIISS) funding
- The Cancer Institute
- Any competitive research grant that carries a significant research infrastructure component.

Any programs that an applicant organisation considers should be included but that are not listed in **Appendix B** should be discussed with the Office for Health and Medical Research prior to submission of the application.

Please note that this data, along with data on income from infrastructure grants is also used to calculate successful applicants' grant allocations for MRSP 2016-2020.

6. Financial viability

The applicant organisation must demonstrate financial viability with a liquidity ratio (liquid assets:operational costs) of 1.0 or more and a low level of debt. Applicant organisations will be required to:

- Provide their most recent audited financial accounts
- Certify that the liquidity ratio is greater than or equal to 1.0 and that the organisation has a low level of debt.

Please note that as part of the application process the applicant organisation's Director and Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) are required to sign a formal letter of declaration (**Appendix A**) to:

- Certify the accuracy of the evidence provided for criterion 5 and criterion 6.
- Agree to the NSW Ministry of Health exchanging MRSP 2016-2020 application information with other NSW Government funded research infrastructure programs. See the section: 'MRSP 2016-2020: ALLOCATION OF AVAILABLE FUNDING' for more details.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Funding Agreement that outlines the State's obligations in relation to the flow of funds and the grant recipient's obligations in relation to reporting and accountability. An authorised signatory from the grant recipient organisation will be required to sign the Funding Agreement with the State, before funds are made available.

The Funding Agreement requires successful applicants to comply with the following:

- Continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the program and report any changes that might have an impact on their eligibility
- Use funding provided through MRSP 2016-2020 within NSW and for infrastructure purposes only*
- Provide annual audited financial accounts and financial accountability reports to demonstrate expenditure of funds and the organisation's ongoing financial viability
- Provide annual reports on research activity
- Produce a research translation plan and report progress made against this plan
- Participate in a mid-term review
- Agree to all information provided in support of MRSP applications being subject to external audit.

*Infrastructure for research consists of essential institutional resources for underpinning research not provided for within research grants. Infrastructure can be further defined as:

'The facilities and functions of a research organisation which are not specific to research projects e.g. animal facilities, maintenance of laboratory equipment and service contracts, scientific equipment not specific to projects, purchase of generic consumables, subscription to gene databases, general maintenance costs, telephony/ communication systems, office and computer equipment, and the salaries of administrative and senior research staff. It excludes funds for staff and materials deployed on specific projects.'

List of Appendices

All applicants to the Medical Research Support Program (MRSP), 2016-2020 will need to download the Standard Application Form and the following appendices:

A. LETTER OF DECLARATION

B. ELIGIBLE GRANTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE GRANT INCOME SPREADSHEET

C. GRANT INCOME SPREADSHEET

The Standard Application Form and all appendices to the *Application Guidelines and Program Details, MRSP 2016-2020* are available to download from the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR) website <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/mrsp>.

