

2021

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

—
**Early-Mid Career
Researcher Grants -
Research Impact
Assessment**



NSW Health

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Call for applications

NSW Health invites eligible host organisations to apply for funding under the **NSW Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants - Research Impact Assessment**.

Applications close on 9 April 2021 and funding will be paid to the host organisation in June 2021. Funding for these grants will be provided for three years from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

Objectives

Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants aim to:

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

Eligible areas of research

This grant will provide funding to a host organisation to recruit an EMC researcher to undertake research impact assessments (RIAs) of NSW Ministry of Health research investments. The EMC researcher will work collaboratively with the NSW Ministry of Health to apply RIAs to grant funded research and other programs and build capability among NSW Ministry of Health staff to apply this approach. To achieve this, the EMC researcher is expected to be embedded within the NSW Ministry of Health for the majority of the fellowship.

Funding amounts

Early-mid career grants of **up to \$130,000 per year for the 3-year duration of the grant (maximum total grant amount \$400,000)** will be awarded.

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

Submission of applications

Applicants must use the Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants - RIA 2021 Application Form and attach any supporting evidence.

Application process

Stage one: Host organisation submits application to NSW Health

Applications must be approved by a designated senior representative (Research Director, Dean of Research etc.) and submitted by a representative of the host organisation.

All applications and attachments should be submitted by email to moh-ohmrgrants@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm on 9 April 2021.

Stage two: NSW Health notifies host organisations of outcome

NSW Health will notify host organisations of the outcome of their applications following independent review by a panel of experts.

NSW Health will enter into a funding agreement with successful host organisations and funding will be paid upfront.

Stage three: Host institutions recruit EMC researchers

EMC researchers should be recruited to funded project opportunities according to host organisation procedures for merit-based recruitment. This process is to be administered by the host organisation. The NSW Ministry of Health must be involved in the selection process for the EMC researcher.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions, should be encouraged to apply.

Following recruitment, a selection report and other required documentation for the EMC researcher must be submitted to NSW Health.

Before you apply

Research collaborations and partnerships

Applicants are encouraged to identify and engage relevant partners who will provide a meaningful contribution to delivery of the research project and implementation of outcomes.

Partners may include:

- NSW Health System partners including NSW Ministry of Health, Pillars, and statewide health services
- local health districts and specialty health networks
- Advanced Health Research Translation Centres and Centres for Innovation in Regional Health
- universities and medical research institutes
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Primary Healthcare Networks
- clinical networks
- non-government organisations
- consumers and patients.

The research must be conducted in NSW but may be part of a wider collaboration.

Industry Partnerships

The program encourages outcome-focused collaborative research partnerships between industry entities and research organisations.

The following principles apply:

- Industry collaborations must involve a lead applicant who is based at an eligible host organisation and who is the main driver of the project. Industry organisations are not eligible to be host organisations.
- Only an eligible lead applicant can apply for grant funding and submit an application on behalf of project partners.
- Applications may include and maintain among project partners one or more industry entities.
- All partners must contribute resources to the project. Industry matched funding is encouraged, but not required.

Priority populations

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

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

Research Translation

All research projects should have potential to lead to changes in clinical practice or policy in the short and/or long term. Applications must clearly describe:

- The significance of the research
- The expected pathway for this to occur
- Links to research partners and other stakeholders who will take the research to the next step on the translation pathway.

Program logic and research impact

Applicants are required to submit a Program Logic diagram with their application, including project aim, inputs, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes and impacts.

Research Impact Assessment

The Program Logic will be used to optimise the probability of research impact at application stage. If the research is funded, the Program Logic will guide the measurement of impact throughout the project and at its conclusion.

Research impact will be considered across five domains:

Domain 1: Knowledge Generation

- New treatments, diagnostics or drug targets
- New clinical or medical prototypes
- Peer-reviewed publications and presentations at conferences
- Media coverage and other non-peer-reviewed publications
- Patent applications.

Domain 2: Capability Building

- New partnerships leveraged
- Training and professional development
- Research students supported.

Domain 3: Policy and Practice

- Instances where research findings are considered in policy development
- Instances of change in clinical practice
- Instances of new health technology or new treatments used in clinical care

Domain 4: Patient health and population outcomes

- Improved health outcomes, including:
 - Reducing the time to an outcome or change in the
 - Change in the likelihood of an outcome occurring

Domain 5: Economic outcomes

- Research jobs created and sustained
- Patents and commercialisation
- Value of leveraged research funding (external grants awarded due to NSW Health funding)
- Reduction in cost of delivering care
- Potential for return on investment.

Intellectual Property

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

Funding conditions and exclusions

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

3. Applicants are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the subject area of the application.
4. Funding is conditional on the Chief Executive of the host organisation signing the declaration on the application form, which outlines the host organisation's obligations to the early-mid career researcher.
5. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC funding. Applications must clearly describe the purpose of the additional funding and justify that the additional research will be complementary but not duplicative.
6. Grants provided under this funding round are one-line grants, not fellowships.

Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet all eligibility criteria.

Host organisation

The host organisation is where most of the research is conducted.

The host organisation must be based in NSW and employ the early-mid career researcher for the duration of the grant.

The host organisation must conduct health and medical research and be a:

- university
- independent medical research institute
- not-for-profit organisation
- NSW Health local health district or specialty health network.

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

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

Administering Organisation

An administering organisation is only required where the funds are held by a separate organisation to the host organisation.

In such cases, the administering organisation will enter into the funding agreement with NSW Health, manage the funds, submit financial reports and coordinate other reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement.

If the host organisation is a NSW Health Organisation, grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation that can manage funds across financial years.

The administering organisation must be:

- a university
- a medical research institute, or
- a non-government organisation in NSW.

Selection criteria

All applications for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria. In addressing the selection criteria, applicants should specifically highlight the relevance to research impact assessment.

Applications should be written in plain English, as applications may be reviewed by a panel member with expertise in a different area to that of the application.

Research project

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

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

Budget

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

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

Skill development

The application will be assessed on potential for skill development for the EMC researcher during the period of the grant.

Examples of skill development activities include:

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

Selection process

Step 1: Eligibility check

Following the closing date for applications, the NSW Ministry of Health will determine if the application has satisfied all eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Review by independent expert panel

An independent selection panel of expert reviewers will assess each application against the selection criteria.

Step 3: Funding recommendation

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

Step 4: Decision and notification

The NSW Ministry for Health determine grant recipients and amounts. All applicants will be informed as to whether they have been awarded funding. This decision is final and may not be appealed.

Step 5: Grant Agreements

The NSW Ministry of Health will contact administering organisations for successful projects to execute a funding agreement. A standard, non-negotiable funding agreement will be used.

Reporting requirements

A schedule for reporting will be outlined in the funding agreement and will include a requirement to provide:

- annual progress reports
- annual financial reports
- a final report following the conclusion of the term of the grant
- post-grant reports related to research translation and research impact.