

2019

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

—
**Spinal Cord Injury Research
Grants**

(2020 - 2024)

Guidelines



NSW Health

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www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

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Call for applications

NSW Health invites eligible individuals to apply for the NSW Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants. Funding for this program will be distributed over the funding period 2020-2024. Researchers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions, are encouraged to apply.

Purpose

The program will support innovative research projects that:

- improve the understanding of spinal cord injury, including potential cure
- improve the quality of life for individuals with spinal cord injury.

Submission of applications

All applications must be completed using the NSW Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants application form and include any supporting evidence. The form can be found at: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/spinal-cord-injury/

All applications must be emailed to MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au. Submission dates are below. Answers to frequently asked questions are available on the spinal cord injury research grants webpage. Please check the webpage regularly.

For queries regarding NSW Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants Program, please email MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au

Indicative program timeline

Activity	Dates
Call for Applications	November 2019
Applications close	15 March 2020
Announcement of successful applicants and commencement of funding	May 2020

Support to apply

Information sessions will be delivered via teleconference/webinar in November 2019. The information sessions will provide an opportunity to clarify the intent and scope of the program and to answer questions about the application process including translation requirements. Answers of common interest arising from the sessions will be posted as 'frequently asked questions' on the Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants Program website. Check

the website regularly and register your interest by emailing MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au

The Office for Health and Medical Research will be available to support the development of applications. Please email MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au

Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants

Objectives

The purpose of the NSW Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants is to fund and incentivise researchers to:

- drive discoveries with the long term aim of improving wellbeing and health outcomes across NSW for people with spinal cord injury
- grow the capacity and reputation of spinal cord injury research in NSW in a way that is equitable and sustainable
- build capability of spinal cord injury researchers in NSW
- realise long-term sustained economic impact for NSW through the development of new therapies in spinal cord injury
- drive cutting-edge, cure and care focused spinal cord injury medical research projects, and develop them through to their long-term potential.

Scope of spinal cord injury research

This funding will support projects that meet the gaps in spinal cord injury research, specifically:

- Basic science – extending knowledge of promising cure focused research (for example, neurological functioning, neurostimulation, neurogenesis, neuropathology, pharmacology, and inflammation)
- Early intervention after an acute spinal cord injury (for example, controlling the inflammatory response)
- Improve functioning (for example, bowel, bladder, sexual, motor, pain, sleep, mental health).

Details of funding

A total funding pool of up to \$15 million is available for Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants. Grants up to \$2.5 million will be provided to successful applications for projects for a three to five year duration from 2020 onwards.

Funds will be distributed as below (these are approximations and will be subject to the Scientific Review Panel's judgement on how applications fit these categories):

- 50% to basic science
- 50% for applied research.

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

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Research funded must be conducted in New South Wales in the health system or an organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partners).
2. Funds 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. Applications 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 Investigator and the Chief Executive of the host organisation signing the declaration on the application form, which outlines the host organisation's obligations to the Project.
5. One application will be accepted per Chief Investigator. No co-investigator should be associated with more than five applications.

Supporting resources

The Office for Health and Medical Research website contains further information about:

- frequently asked questions
- other grant programs that may be relevant to spinal cord injury researchers, including Early to Mid-Career and translational research grants.

Program logic

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

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

Examples of outputs include:

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

Examples of outcomes include:

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

Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet ALL of the following eligibility criteria:

1. The Chief Investigator is NSW based

The Chief Investigator must reside in or plan to move to NSW and must be employed by a NSW based organisation:

- Local health district
- Medical research institute
- University
- Non-government organisation.

2. At least 50% of the research team is based in NSW

The project must be conducted in NSW and at least 50% of the research team must be based in NSW. The application must demonstrate engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders (including clinicians, consumers, researchers, patient groups, and policy makers).

3. Intellectual Property remains in NSW

Intellectual property generated through the research must remain in NSW.

4. Submit a complete application

The application form must be fully completed with all relevant and required documentation attached. The declarations on the form must be signed.

5. Resource Requirements

The application must identify the core team members and other personnel financially supported by the grant throughout the duration of the grant.

6. Governance

The application must provide a clear governance structure for the project which must include the Chief Executive (or equivalent) or delegate of the host organisation.

7. Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

The Chief Investigator must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia or have an appropriate working visa for the full-term of the Grant. Chief Investigators who are neither Australian citizens nor permanent residents must provide evidence of residency status, and the right to remain in Australia for the duration of the funding period, certified by a

Justice of the Peace or equivalent. Note that for electronic documents, an official Visa Entitlement Verification Online statement is sufficient, Justice of the Peace certification is not required. Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents are not required to provide evidence.

For clinical applicants

The Senior Researchers who plan to undertake clinical work must:

- hold current, appropriate registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- hold current membership of the relevant speciality college, if required for clinical practice
- undertake clinical work in a NSW public health organisation
- either be an employee of a NSW medical research institute, university or non-government organisation and undertake clinical practice in a NSW public health organisation, or be an employee of a NSW public health organisation, including but not limited to:
 - Staff Specialists, including clinical academics
 - Visiting Medical Officers
 - Nurses
 - Allied Health (including pharmacists and radiographers).

If a researcher is seeking a time limited appointment within a public health organisation whilst undertaking research, there must be a letter of acknowledgement from the researcher's local health district Director of Medical Administration/Services that the time limited appointment will be considered by the relevant Medical and Dental Appointment Advisory Committee.

Host organisation

The host organisation is where the research is undertaken. If the host organisation is a public health organisation, grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation that is a university, medical research institute, or non-government organisation. Both the host organisation and the administering organisation (if separate to the host organisation) will enter into the funding agreement which will articulate the arrangements for administration of funds, and reporting for the period of the grant.

1. Located in NSW

The host organisation must be in NSW. Clinical Scientists may undertake clinical work separately from where research is undertaken. If the grant is to be used to quarantine research time and backfill a clinical position, the application must also be endorsed by the Chief Executive/Executive Director of the organisation, where clinical duties are to be undertaken.

2. Organisation conducts health and medical research

The host organisation must conduct health and medical research in one of the following places:

- a department or research centre within a University
- an independent medical research institute
- a not-for-profit organisation, or a local health district.

3. Infrastructure support

The host organisation will provide the appropriate infrastructure support for the research project, including wet/dry lab space, computer equipment, and desk space.

Administering organisation

If the host organisation is a public health organisation, grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation. The administering organisation must be a university, medical research institute, or non-government organisation. It may be the same as the host organisation.

1. Located in NSW

The administering organisation must be in NSW.

2. Organisation manages the funds

The administering organisation will manage the funds and is responsible for submitting finance reports.

Selection criteria

All applications for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria. In addressing the selection criteria, applications need to specifically highlight the relevance to spinal cord injury research. Applications should be written in plain English, as applications may be reviewed by a panel member who may have expertise in a different area to that of the application.

The project

1. Strong scientific basis for the proposed project

The application must include a research and development plan that has:

- clear and well-defined objectives
- a strongly developed scientific approach relevant to the scope of the plan
- a strong study design.

The research and development plan should include: the research questions, the development of the intervention where relevant, the evidence gaps the research will explore, purpose and objectives, detailed study methodology, and what will be achieved in the study period.

The research and development plan should indicate when and what research translation and stakeholder engagement activities will occur (reflecting the research translation plan, see Selection Criteria 5 below).

2. Significance of concept

The application must demonstrate the extent to which the project will result in a significant or major advance in treatment and/or knowledge in this field.

3. High probability of achieving objectives

The research and development plan should be highly feasible to deliver the specified research within the grant period given the expertise, research tools, and techniques present in the relevant research environment. This includes a list of key project milestones and deliverables (activities, expected outputs and outcomes) with timeframes and management of perceived risks. There is an expectation that at the completion of the project, it will be possible to report on meaningful outcomes.

4. Health economic benefit

The application must indicate the potential health economic benefit from the research outcome.

5. Clear path to translation

The application must include a research translation plan, appropriate to the type of research. For non-basic science research, the translation plan must demonstrate how the research will be translated into practice.

The research translation plan should be linked to key project milestones and to a communication and stakeholder engagement plan. It should include a list

of planned activities to support the translation of knowledge to and from the research project into policy and/or practice where relevant. Each activity should include information on who will be engaged, when, and how, as well as the intended impact of each engagement, and how it will support successful implementation of the research findings.

The application must also describe how the team intends to submit results for publication to a reputable peer reviewed and open source publication.

6. Engages with the health system

The application must demonstrate how the project engages (collaboration, partnership, advice-giving, stakeholder), with the NSW health system.

7. Satisfies other key general principles

The application must demonstrate how other key principles of quality research are addressed including:

- (a) Patient centred – demonstrate how the research aims to benefit patients
- (b) Collaboration – demonstrate collaboration with clinicians and other key stakeholders
- (c) Team-based with mutually accountable members – demonstrate role of each team member and how they are mutually accountable
- (d) Consumer engagement – demonstrate how consumers will be engaged throughout the project timeframe
- (e) Equitable – demonstrate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, rural communities and other minority groups will be catered for
- (f) Transparency – demonstrate how the project will be communicated to key stakeholders in a transparent and accountable way.

The team

8. The team demonstrates capability in their field of research and a track record relative to opportunity

The application should list all individuals in the team, their academic qualifications, and any relevant professional qualifications with the year awarded, the awarding body and country.

The application should list any research (journal articles, books, reports, patents or conference presentations), clinical and industry appointments, and positions held for the previous ten years, for all individuals in the team.

Applications should describe (for all individuals in the team) existing skills and experience that:

- Directly relates to the topic area(s) and/or methodology of the project, or
- Relates to the nominated area(s) for development (and how participation in the project will help to strengthen these skills).

To assess track record relative to opportunity, applications should highlight any significant career disruptions or clinical responsibilities that could reasonably be considered to have had an impact on their track record over the previous ten years, for all individuals in the team.

9. Engagement with mid-career researchers (researchers with 5-15 years research experience)

Applications which include mid-career researchers as part of the team are strongly encouraged.

Selection process

Application review

STEP 1: Initial eligibility appraisal

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

STEP 2: Scoring against the selection criteria

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

STEP 3: Reviewer feedback

The Scientific Review Panel members will provide written feedback to applicants on their application. The applicant will have an opportunity to respond to the feedback and if requested, submit an amended final application.

STEP 5: Recommendation for funding

The Scientific Review Panel will agree on the final ranking of all eligible applications, and will make a recommendation for funding to the NSW Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary, Population and Public Health Division, NSW Ministry of Health.

STEP 6: Decision and notification

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

STEP 7: Grant Agreements initiated

The NSW Ministry of Health will make contact with successful Chief Investigators to develop funding agreements with the host and administering organisations.

Reporting requirements

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

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

Implementation assessment and evaluation

The grant will periodically be assessed to ensure it is meeting its objectives. This will be undertaken in collaboration with the grant recipients.

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