

2021

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

—
Early-Mid Career
Researcher Grants -
Cardiovascular

Guidelines



NSW Health

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www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

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Further copies of this document can be downloaded from the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage:

www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/

SHPN (OHMR): 210114

Call for Applications

NSW Health invites eligible individuals to apply for the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program **Early-Mid Career (EMC) Researcher Grants**.

Funding for these Grants will be distributed over three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24. Clinician researchers, researchers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions are encouraged to apply.

For the purpose of this Grant, an EMC researcher is defined as a researcher who is less than 15 years postdoctoral and is not at Professor level (note Associate Professor EMC applicants will be assessed in three categories: 0-2 years post-PhD, 2-8 years post-PhD and 8-15 years post PhD).

PhD candidates who will have their PhD awarded by 31 August 2021 are eligible to apply.

Objectives

The EMC Researcher Grants aim to:

- support research excellence among EMC cardiovascular researchers in NSW
- fund research that improves wellbeing and health outcomes for people with cardiovascular disease
- embed high-quality, innovative cardiovascular research in the NSW health system
- encourage collaboration, leadership and capacity building in the NSW research environment
- support EMC researchers to gain research grants and fellowships from bodies such as the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Medical Research Future Fund
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase and document research impact and translation.

Indicative Grant timeline

Stage	Date
Call for Applications opens	19 February 2021
Applications close	19 May 2021
Announcement of successful applicants and commencement of funding	August 2021

Pre-application workshop

The NSW Cardiovascular Research Network (CVRN) will host an interactive workshop on 25 March 2021 to help applicants understand NSW Health requirements, including program logic, and prepare their application.

To participate, you must register your interest by **26 February 2021** by emailing your name, contact details, host organisation, field of research and your preferred attendance mode for the workshop– face to face or online to: cvrn@heartfoundation.org.au. For more information about the CVRN or to become a member **click here**.

Further information about the workshop will be provided to interested applicants.

Peer review of draft applications

All applications are expected to have undergone a peer review process before being submitted to NSW Health. Please arrange informal peer-review by a colleague or mentor prior to submission.

EMC applicants who do not have an existing research mentor available to provide feedback on their application before submission may contact MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au to request assistance.

Cardiovascular research

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

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

Eligible areas of research

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

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

Australian Cardiovascular Alliance (ACvA) and Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Research Flagships

Applicants are encouraged to consider emerging opportunities with national strategic collaborations. In particular, opportunities associated with priority areas aligned with the six strategic research flagships identified by the ACvA and MRFF: Drug Discovery; Biomedical Engineering; Big Data; Clinical Trials; Precision Medicine and Implementation and Policy.

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

Further information about ACvA and the Flagships is available at www.ozheart.org. Directors can be contacted via acva@ozheart.org. Please mark your email for the attention of Catherine Shang PhD, nominate the relevant Flagship and include 'NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program' in the subject line. Further information on the MRFF can be found here (<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/cardiovascular-health-mission>).

Clinician researchers

Clinicians, including medical, nursing, and allied health professionals, are encouraged to apply.

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

- Clinician – medical: Salary limit – up to 0.6 FTE Staff Specialist or Visiting Medical Officers.
- Clinician – non-medical: Salary limit – up to 0.6 FTE as per Allied Health (including Pharmacist and radiographers) and Nursing awards.

Funding amounts

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

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

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

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Research funded through an EMC Researcher Grant must be conducted in the New South Wales health system or affiliated organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partner).
2. EMC 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. Applications must clearly describe the purpose of the additional funding and justify that the additional research will be complementary but not duplicative.
4. Funding is conditional on the EMC researcher and the Chief Executive of the host organisation signing the declaration on the application form, which outlines the host organisation's obligations to the EMC researcher.
5. One application will be accepted per applicant.

6. Under the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program, applicants may only apply for either an Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant or a Senior Researcher Grant.
7. Grants provided under the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program are one-line grants, not fellowships.
8. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC fellowships.
9. Past recipients of a NSW Health Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program grant may apply for funding in this round, if their funding period will conclude by July 2022. Applications will be awarded according to merit based on the selection criteria. If funding availability is limited and two applicants are of equal merit, preference will be given to applicants that have not received previous funding.
10. Applicants who have received a previous NSW Health grant must justify further funding according to productivity and impact specifically related to the previous grant in their application, including:
 - a. publications arising from the grant
 - b. advances arising from the research, including any translation that has occurred
 - c. external funding applications and funding received
 - d. capacity building, including students, trainees and fellows arising from the grant.

Submission of applications

Applicants must use the EMC Researcher Grants 2021 Application Form and attach any supporting evidence.

The form is available at:

www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/

All applications should be submitted by email to: MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au. All applications will receive an email acknowledging receipt within 48 hours. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up if no acknowledgement is received. Please note that the maximum file size is 20MB. Larger files will be rejected by the NSW Health server.

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

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

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 interventions, 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

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:
 - Change in the time to develop an outcome
 - 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.

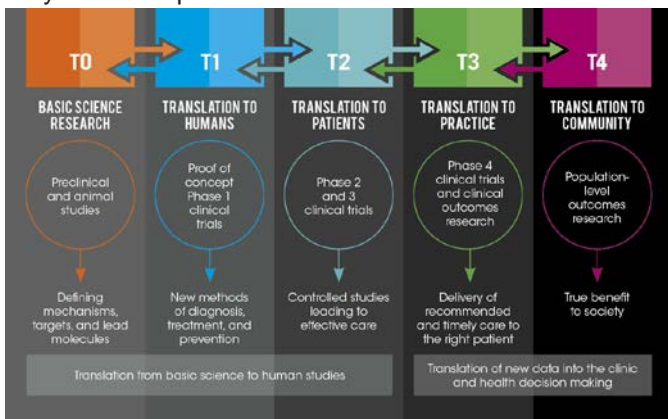
Research Translation

All research projects should have potential to lead to changes in clinical practice or policy in the short and/or long term, even if not during the funded period.

Applications must clearly describe:

- The long-term goal and clinical significance of the research
- The expected pathway for this to occur (note this may not be linear)
- How the researchers will engage with 'next users', i.e. research partners and other stakeholders who will take the research to the next step on the translation pathway.

An example translation pathway is below. Applicants may use their preferred framework.



Source: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Translational Research Institute - <https://tri.uams.edu/about-tri/what-is-translational-research>

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.

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 higher risk and priority populations where appropriate. These may

include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, individuals from a non-English speaking background, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and people living in regional and remote areas.

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

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

Declaration of career disruption

Applicants may present a declaration and/or evidence of career disruption for consideration by the review panel. Please refer to the NHMRC policy on career disruption:

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/attachments/relative_to_opportunity_policy0720.pdf.

Career Disruption is defined as a continuous absence from work of 90 days or more and/or continuous long term, part time employment. This may be due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

Career disruptions may be declared in the application form, if relevant.

EMC applicants will be assessed in three categories: 0-2 years post-PhD, 2-8 years post-PhD, and 8-15 years post PhD. If you consider that career disruption places you in a different category to your chronological one, you may choose the adjusted category on the application form. For example, if you were awarded your PhD 9 years ago but have taken 3 years of maternity leave since then, you may nominate the 3-7 years post PhD category for the purposes of review. You must attach appropriate justification of career disruption.

Note: applicants who have reached full Professor level must apply for a Senior Researcher grant, regardless of years post PhD and/or career disruption.

Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet all eligibility criteria.

EMC researcher

Based in NSW

The EMC researcher must reside in or plan to move to NSW for the duration of the grant and must be employed by an NSW based medical research institute, university, or non-government organisation.

Cardiovascular research

The EMC researcher must satisfy the requirement that their research is in the field of cardiovascular research (see Scope of Cardiovascular Research on page 3).

Submit a complete application

The EMC researcher must fully complete the application form, attach all relevant and required documentation; sign the declaration on the form and include certification from the host organisation.

Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

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

Classified as an EMC researcher

The EMC researcher must have worked less than 15 years postdoctoral and not reached Professor level. Note: Associate Professors can apply at EMC level.

Host organisation requirements

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

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

- a university
- an independent medical research institute
- a not-for-profit organisation

- a local health district or other public health organisation.

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 undertaken.

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

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.

Grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation that can manage funds across financial years, as the full grant amount will be paid upfront.

The administering organisation must be a university, medical research institute, or 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 cardiovascular health. Applications should be written in plain English, as applications may be reviewed by a panel member with expertise in a different area of cardiovascular science to that of the application.

Applicant

Applicants will be assessed on:

- academic and relevant clinical qualifications
- research, clinical and industry experience, including demonstrated capacity to work in multidisciplinary teams
- skills and experience directly related to the topic area(s) and methodology of the research project

- track record in research, relative to opportunity
- track record in research impact
- responsibilities that could reasonably be considered to have had a negative impact on research track record over the previous ten years.

Research project

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

- evidence of a gap in knowledge, provided by prior systematic reviews and/or gap analyses, and a clearly articulated need for the research
- how the proposed project will advance existing knowledge and why this is important
- the extent to which the proposed research is innovative and novel
- strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology
- potential outputs and outcomes of the research and how the research will improve clinical practice and/or patient outcomes in the short or long term
- the plan for research translation and impact
- ability to deliver the research outputs, outcomes and/or objectives within the grant period.

The proposed research project does not have to address every criterion but must demonstrate strengths in relevant criteria.

- 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
- consideration of priority population groups if appropriate.

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 and capacity building

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

Examples of skill development activities that may be undertaken include:

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

EMC researchers in the 8-15 years post-PhD category should also include reference to leadership potential and capacity development, including:

- recruitment and retention of research staff
- building a program of research
- leading collaborations within NSW, Australia and internationally
- leading applications for national grant funding
- lead roles in relevant networks, advisory committees or governance groups.

Selection process

Step 1: Eligibility check

Following the closing date for applications, NSW Health will determine if each application has satisfied the 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 NSW Health.

Step 4: Decision and notification

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

Step 5: Grant Agreements

NSW Health will make contact with successful EMC researchers to develop and enter into funding agreements with the administering organisation.

Post award requirements

The Administering Organisation will enter into a funding agreement with NSW Health that sets out obligations.

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

- annual progress reports
- annual financial reports
- A final report following the conclusion of the term of the grant.

All grant recipients are expected to mentor a junior cardiovascular researcher. NSW Health may make contact to facilitate this arrangement.

Program evaluation

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

Recipients and host organisations may be required to supply information and meet with NSW Health staff to support the evaluation of the program.