

2022

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

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# Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants

Guidelines

Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program



NSW Health

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[www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

[www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au](http://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/](http://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/)

SHPN (OHMR) 211162

## Call for Nominations

NSW Health invites eligible **host organisations** to nominate researchers for an **Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grant**. Up to five grants may be awarded under Round 3 of the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program. Each grant will receive up to \$1 million over three years.

Nominations will only be accepted from host organisations and must be signed by the nominated researcher. Each host organisation is required to undertake a selection process and may then submit a maximum of **two** nominations. (If an organisation is administering grant funds on behalf of a separate host organisation, this will not be counted towards the administering organisation's limit).

Nominations will not be accepted directly from researchers.

All enquiries and nominations will be treated in the strictest confidence.

For the purposes of this grant, an elite postdoctoral researcher is a researcher who:

- is ten years or less post doctorate
- is currently living and working interstate or overseas and is willing to relocate to NSW for the period of the grant
- has been specifically identified by the host organisation as a high-priority target for recruitment, aligning with existing research programs
- is a talented emerging leader in their research field, and has demonstrated capacity to contribute to an innovative, high impact research program
- has identified potential to undertake internationally significant cardiovascular research with high impact results in NSW.

## Objectives

Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants aim to promote NSW as a global leader in cardiovascular research by attracting talented researchers who have undertaken a period of postdoctoral research overseas or interstate to conduct research in NSW.

Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants fund and incentivise talented researchers to move to NSW to work in cardiovascular research in order to:

- conduct pioneering and innovative cardiovascular research and drive discoveries with the long-term aim of improving health and wellbeing

- increase the national and international competitiveness of NSW cardiovascular research
- develop new collaborations and partnerships for research and translation within NSW, Australia and internationally
- support leadership development
- build NSW capacity in a strong, vibrant and highly skilled research workforce
- realise long-term sustained economic impact for NSW through the development of new therapies
- leverage Australian Government funding opportunities to further research and its translation in NSW
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase research impact.

## Cardiovascular Research

The funding will support elite postdoctoral researchers working in 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.

Elite postdoctoral researchers may work on any aspect of cardiovascular disease research including:

- Basic Science
- Clinical Medicine and Science
- Health Services Research
- Public Health

## Indicative Grant timeline

Stage	Date
Call for Nominations opens	January 2022
Nominations close	30 June 2022
Outcomes announced	September 2022
Elite Postdoctoral Researchers relocate to NSW and research projects commence	Between September 2022 and June 2023

## Funding available

Total funding of up to \$1 million per grant over three years will be available and may be used for salary, consumables, and specific research equipment if required.

In addition, a one-off funding amount of up to \$10,000 for the researcher's relocation expenses (and up to \$20,000 for family relocation expenses) may be available on request with appropriate justification.

Host and partner organisations are expected to provide a supportive research environment including significant in-kind support. This should be detailed in the nomination form.

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

Host organisations are encouraged to consider emerging opportunities with national strategic collaborations. In particular, please consider priority areas aligned with the six strategic research flagships identified by the ACvA: 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 <https://www.ozheart.org/>.

Further information on the MRFF including its strategy and priorities can be found here <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund>.

## Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants are open to researchers who currently live and work **outside** of NSW, either interstate or overseas, and who are ten years or less post-doctorate. Researchers

already residing in NSW, even if on temporary visas, are not eligible.

2. Research funded through an Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grant must be conducted in an eligible host organisation.
3. Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grant funding 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. Proposals where a significant portion of funding is expended on a single item of equipment will not be considered.
4. Host Organisations are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the proposed subject area. Nominations must clearly describe the purpose of the additional funding and justify that the additional research will be complementary but not duplicative.
5. Funding is conditional on the Elite Postdoctoral Researcher and the Chief Executive of the host organisation(s) signing the declaration on the nomination form, which outlines the host organisation's obligations and the support which will be provided to the researcher.
6. A maximum of two nominations will be accepted from each host organisation.
7. Grants provided under the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program, including Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants, are one-line grants, not fellowships.
8. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC funding.

## Research collaborations and partnerships

Host Organisations are strongly encouraged to identify and engage relevant partners to support effective 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.

For assistance with engaging with a NSW Ministry of Health Policy Branch, please contact [MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au)

## 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 researcher 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 host organisation can apply for grant funding and submit a nomination on behalf of project partners.
- Nominations may include and maintain among project partners one or more Australian industry entities.
- All partners must contribute resources to the project. Industry matched funding is encouraged, but not required.

## Partner Statements of Support

A statement of support signed by the CEO of any partner organisations should be submitted with the nomination, detailing the support that will be provided by the partner organisation.

## Clinical practice

If the researcher will undertake clinical duties during the period of the grant, the nature, FTE commitment and alignment with research activities for these should be detailed in the nomination. The Chief Executive of the Local Health District or other employer will be required to sign the Declaration on the nomination form to confirm the employment opportunity.

## Submission of nominations

Host Organisations must use the Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants 2021 Nomination Form available at: <https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/>

All nominations and any additional required documents should be submitted by email to: [MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au)

**All nominations will receive an email acknowledging receipt within 48 hours. It is the host organisation'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.

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

## Program Logic and research impact

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

Note that outcomes and impacts may not be realised during the funded period, they may be projected to occur in future. Particularly for basic science, the 'next users' who are responsible for taking the research findings to the next step for translation should be involved from the start of the project so they understand the research and can move the findings towards translation.

## Research Impact Assessment

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

The potential for research impact will be considered in the following domains:

1. Knowledge generation
2. Capability building
3. Policy and practice
4. Population and public health outcomes, including health equity-related outcomes
5. Economic impacts.

## Research Translation

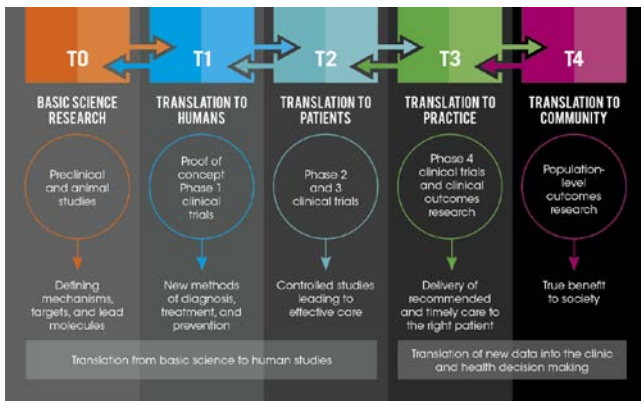
All research projects should have potential to lead to changes in clinical practice or policy in the short and/or long term, even if not during the funded period. Nominations must clearly describe:

- 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 nomination.

## 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, rural 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 nomination, available at [www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2017\\_034.pdf](http://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](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:

- major illness/injury
- parental or carer responsibilities.

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

## Nomination and assessment process

Nominations for Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants will only be accepted from host organisations and will not be accepted directly from researchers.

**The host organisation must provide evidence of a selection process for the nominated researcher, including references.**

The nomination and assessment process is outlined below:

1. An eligible host organisation identifies a potential applicant via an open selection process and prepares a nomination for submission to NSW Health, using the 2021 Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants Nomination Form. A maximum of two nominations may be submitted per host organisation\*.
2. NSW Health assesses each nomination against the **eligibility criteria**.
3. All eligible nominations are assessed against the **selection criteria** by an independent expert panel, in collaboration with NSW Health, who may seek independent advice and verification regarding the nomination. This may include interviewing the proposed elite postdoctoral researcher and/or representatives of the host organisation, if required
4. The expert panel makes recommendations to NSW Health regarding the nominations. Funding is approved or declined. Funding is contingent on execution of an agreement between NSW Health and the host (or administering) organisation.

Further information may be requested from the host, administering or partner organisations at any stage during the above process.

*\* Note that where an organisation will administer grant funds on behalf of a separate host organisation, this will not count towards their own two-nomination limit.*

## Eligibility criteria

Nominations must meet **all** eligibility criteria. These should be addressed in the nomination prepared by the host organisation.

### Eligibility of Researcher

#### 1. Moving from interstate/overseas to NSW

The researcher must not currently live or work in NSW.

If funding is awarded, the researcher must move to NSW. The researcher must reside in NSW and be employed by an eligible host and/or administering organisation for the full grant period.

#### 2. Classified as an early mid-career researcher

The elite postdoctoral researcher must have worked for ten years or less post-doctorate.

#### 3. Working in cardiovascular research

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

#### 4. Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

Australian citizens and permanent residents must provide evidence of this with the nomination.

If the researcher is not an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia, awarding of funding will be conditional on obtaining an appropriate working visa for the full term of the funding period. This process is to be facilitated by the host organisation. A copy of the visa must be provided to NSW Health.

#### 5. Submit a complete nomination

The Host Organisation must submit a complete nomination form, attach all relevant and required documentation; sign the declaration on the form and include certification from the elite postdoctoral researcher.

### 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 that conducts health and medical research
- 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.

The host organisation has a key role to play in supporting the Elite Postdoctoral Researcher who will be moving to NSW from interstate or overseas, including by providing wet/dry lab space, computer equipment, desk space and other in-kind contributions. If significant infrastructure is required for the research, the nomination should outline how this will be obtained.

The host organisation is responsible for consideration of any logistical support requested, including travel arrangements and organising temporary accommodation.

Partnerships between organisations are encouraged, and additional research funding and in-kind support may also be provided by partner organisations.

A statement of support signed by the CEO of the host organisation should be submitted with the nomination, detailing:

- why this particular researcher has been selected for nomination by the host
- alignment of the proposed research program with current and proposed research within the host organisation, and how the proposed research would build on research already undertaken in NSW
- the support that will be provided by the host organisation.

### 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 nominations for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria. In addressing the selection criteria, host organisations should specifically highlight the relevance to cardiovascular health. Nominations should be written in plain English, as they will be reviewed by several panel members, some of whom may have expertise in a different area of cardiovascular science to that of the nomination.

### Researcher (40%)

Elite postdoctoral researchers will be assessed on:

- evidence that the researcher is of exceptional international standard
- evidence of excellence in communication of research
- contributions within the researcher's profession and the research community outside their current role
- academic and relevant professional qualifications
- track record in research, relative to opportunity
- track record in research impact
- research, clinical and industry experience, including demonstrated capacity to develop, contribute to and lead multidisciplinary teams
- experience in research projects that involve collaborations to bridge different disciplines and enhance competitiveness and innovation
- skills and experience directly related to the topic area(s) and methodology of the research project
- ability to deliver outcomes within the funded period.

### Research Project (40%)

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; why it is important to NSW and how it aligns with ACvA and MRFF priorities.
- 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
- feasibility of achieving the research outputs, outcomes and/or objectives within the grant period.
- 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
- the plan for research translation and impact
- relationship to existing research undertaken by the host organisation and the research team
- consideration of priority population groups if appropriate
- scalability and generalisability of results if appropriate

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

### Budget

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

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

### Leadership and capacity building (10%)

The nomination must provide details of:

- Development of leadership skills during the researcher's career to date,



- How these will be further developed during the period of funding, and what the outcomes of this will be
- How the grant will help to build and maintain capacity in cardiovascular research in NSW.

Examples of leadership and capacity building activities include:

- leading a program of research with significant impact
- recruitment and retention of research staff
- creating opportunities for PhD and Early Mid-Career researchers
- mentoring and supervision of other researchers
- leading the development of new collaborations within NSW, Australia and internationally
- leading applications for national grant funding, including facilitating the involvement of junior researchers
- active, leading roles in relevant networks, advisory committees or governance groups
- leading collaborations with clinicians and others involved in translation of research findings.

### Support from Host and Partner Organisations (10%)

The host organisation plays a key role in positioning the Elite Postdoctoral Researcher for success. Host and Partner support will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment of the research project with current and proposed research within the host organisation (or justification if it does not align), and details of how a supportive environment will be provided for the researcher and the project
- in-kind and cash contributions including Infrastructure, logistical and other support provided to the project

### Referee Reports

At least two referee reports for the nominated researcher should be provided. The reports may be in the format preferred by the host organisation, should address the selection criteria above and should contain the names and contact details of the referees.

### 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 and financial acquittal following the conclusion of the term of the grant.

All Elite Postdoctoral Researchers 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.

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