2023

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

Senior and Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants - Cardiovascular

Guidelines

NSW GOVERNMENT

NSW Health

1 Reserve Road

St Leonards NSW 2065

(02) 9391 9228

www.health.nsw.gov.au

www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

Further copies of this document can be downloaded from the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/

SHPN (OHMR): 230349

ISBN: 978-1-76023-536-9

Contents

Call for Applications

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

Funding for these grants will be provided for **three-year** research projects. All researchers are encouraged to apply, including clinician researchers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, researchers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions.

For the purpose of these Grants:

- an **EMC Researcher** is defined as a researcher who is within 15 years of the conferral of their PhD (or equivalent) on the date on which applications close and has not reached full professorial level. PhD students who expect to have their PhD conferred by 15 May 2024 are eligible to apply. EMC Researcher Grant applicants will be assessed in three categories: 0-2 years post-PhD, 3-7 years post-PhD and 8-15 years post PhD.
- a **Senior Researcher** is defined as a researcher who is 15 years or more postdoctoral OR a researcher who is less than 15 years postdoctoral, but who has reached full Professor level. Note: Associate Professors may apply as EMC researchers if they are less than 15 years post-doctoral.

Objectives

Senior and EMC Researcher Grants aim to:

- foster research excellence and increase the number of outstanding cardiovascular researchers in NSW
- fund research that improves wellbeing and health outcomes
- embed high-quality, innovative cardiovascular research in the NSW health system
- encourage collaboration, leadership, and capacity building in the NSW research environment
- support NSW researchers to leverage national funding opportunities to further research and its translation in NSW
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase research impact and translation.

Indicative Grant timeline

Stage	Date
Call for Applications opens	1 June 2023
Workshop: CVD Senior and EMC Researcher Grants	17 July 2023
Online Portal opens	18 July 2023
Researchers submit applications via online Portal	By 25 August 2023
Host/ administering organisations review and submit applications via online Portal	By 8 September 2023
Applications close	8 September 2023
Applicants notified of outcomes	November 2023
Research commences	February 2024

Pre-application workshop

The NSW Cardiovascular Research Network (CVRN) will host an interactive workshop on 17 July 2023 to help applicants understand NSW Health requirements and prepare their application.

To participate, please register your interest by **26 June 2023** 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 posted on the NSW Health Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage and also provided directly to applicants who register their interest.

Submission of applications

Application submission process

The Office for Health and Medical Research's online grant management Portal will open on 18 July 2023.

Applications will only be accepted via the online Portal.

Please use the word version of the application form which is available on the NSW Health Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage to develop applications and then enter the required information into the Portal when it opens on 18 July.

A *How-to-Guide* to the new grant management Portal will be available on the website from 17 July. Portal training for researchers will be provided at the Cardiovascular Research Network Workshop on 17 July.

Answers to frequently asked questions and updates on the Cardiovascular Research Capacity 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.

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.

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 by 31 July 2023 to request assistance.

Eligible areas of research

Funding will support researchers working in cardiovascular research across basic science, biomedical, clinical medicine 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 basic science research and 40% to clinical medicine and science research, health services research, data science, and population health research.

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.

Funding amounts

Senior and EMC Researcher Grants have a 3-year duration.

- **Senior Researcher Grants** will be awarded a maximum of $750,000.
- **EMC Researcher Grants** will be awarded a maximum of $450,000.

A small number of outstanding EMC Researcher Grant 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 funding are required to provide a separate additional budget and justification for this. The proposed research project 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 and equipment.

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Research funded through Senior and EMC Researcher Grants must be conducted in the New South Wales health system or an affiliated organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partner).
2. Funding is conditional on the Senior or EMC Researcher and the Chief Executive(s) of the host/ administering organisation agreeing to the **required declarations** when submitting the application form. These declarations outline the obligations of each party.
3. Senior and 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.
4. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC fellowships.
5. 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 not duplicative.

6. Researchers may submit a maximum of **one application** as Chief Investigator. Researchers may be named on additional applications as Associate Investigators or team members.
7. Under the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program, applicants may only apply for **either** an Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant or a Senior Researcher Grant in the same grant round, not both.
8. Successful applicants must apply for federal funding (NHMRC, MRFF, ARC etc) at least once during the funded period or within 12 months of the grant end date and provide evidence of the application, scores, feedback and outcome to NSW Health.
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 December 2023. Applications will be awarded according to merit based on the selection criteria. If 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:
    - publications arising from the grant
    - advances arising from the research, including any translation that has occurred
    - external funding applications and funding received
    - capacity building, including students, trainees and fellows arising from the grant.

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.

Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

Applicants are encouraged to consider, and align their research where appropriate, with the MRFF Cardiovascular Health Mission Roadmap and Implementation Plan, including the underlying considerations and funding principles. More information is available here.

Australian Cardiovascular Alliance (ACvA)

Please consider opportunities associated with ACvA's strategic research initiatives.

ACvA's Clinical Themes Initiative is bringing together the cardiovascular sector to develop ambitious collaborative research solutions to address unmet needs in six areas: coronary artery disease, heart failure, arrhythmias, stroke, hypertension and improving cardiovascular outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACvA has seven flagships that span the translational pipeline and include: Disease Mechanisms; Drug Discovery; Biomedical Engineering; Big Data; Clinical Trials; Precision Medicine and Implementation and Policy. The flagships provide a platform of expertise from basic research to clinical care. The Directors of each ACvA flagship 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, the Clinical Themes Initiative and the Flagships is available here. For further information please email acva@ozheart.org. Mark your email for the attention of Dr Catherine Shang and include 'NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program' in the subject line.

Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet all eligibility criteria.

Senior and EMC Researcher requirements

Based in NSW and employed by an eligible host/ administering organisation

For the duration of the grant, the Senior or EMC researcher must reside in NSW and be employed by an eligible host/ administering organisation (see below).

Cardiovascular research

The Senior or 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 Senior or EMC researcher must complete the online application form fully, attach all relevant and required documentation; agree to the declaration on the form and receive certification from the host/ administering 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.

Classified as a Senior or EMC researcher

Senior researchers must be 15 years or more postdoctoral OR if less than 15 years postdoctoral, have reached full Professor level.

EMC researchers must have worked less than 15 years postdoctoral and not reached full professor level. Associate Professors are eligible to apply if less than 15 years post doctorate.

Host organisation requirements

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

The host organisation must be in NSW, 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.

Clinician researchers 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.

An authorised representative of the host organisation is required to review the application form and to certify that the organisation complies with the requirements of the grant.

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 as the full funding amount will be paid upfront. Please refer to administering organisation requirements.

Administering organisation requirements

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 funding amount will be paid upfront.

The administering organisation must be:

- a university
- a medical research institute, or
- a not-for-profit organisation that conducts health and medical research in NSW.

Note: For-profit industry organisations are not eligible to be host or administering organisations or to apply for funding but may be partners on the grant.

Relative to opportunity policy

Applicants may present a declaration and/ or evidence of circumstances that have affected the applicant's research productivity for consideration by the review panel. These circumstances might include career

disruption due to pregnancy, illness/ injury and/ or carer responsibilities, as well as other relative to opportunity considerations. Please refer to the NHMRC relative to opportunity policy here.

Applicants for EMC Researcher Grants will be assessed in three categories: 0-2 years post-PhD, 3-7 years post-PhD, and 8-15 years post PhD. Career disruption may place you in a different category to your chronological one. For example, if you were awarded your PhD 9 years ago but have taken 3 years of maternity leave since then, you may fall into the 3-7 years post PhD category for the purposes of review. You must attach appropriate justification of career disruption and NSW Health reserves the right to determine the category within which your application is assessed.

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

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 research.

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.

Chief Investigator (40%)

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 and research impact, relative to opportunity
- potential for the Chief Investigator to leverage this grant to gain research funding and fellowships from other funding bodies.

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 against 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
- clarity of the research aim(s) and research question(s)
- strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology in achieving the aims of the project
- consideration of priority population groups if relevant
- program logic, with the 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 successfully delivering the research project within the proposed timeframe
- the plan for research translation and impact, including consideration of data management and access, commercialisation and intellectual property where appropriate
- engagement with appropriate partners to support translation where appropriate
- the skills of the proposed research team that are relevant to the project, and each team member has the ability to contribute meaningfully to the research
- relationship to existing research undertaken by the host organisation and the research team
- strong project governance structure with evidence of appropriate and sustainable relationships with key stakeholders including those who will likely use the research findings.

Budget

The budget should be detailed and well-justified and will be assessed on:

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

Skill development, leadership and capacity building (20%)

All applicants will be assessed on skill development, leadership and capacity building with slightly different emphasis between these components expected from EMC Researchers and Senior Researchers.

EMC Researcher Grant 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 research 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 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.

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.

Senior Researcher Grant applicants are asked to provide a vision for leadership and capacity development in research, taking into consideration the examples of skills development and capacity building given above, including:

- development of leadership skills during the researcher's career to date, and the contributions and impacts of this leadership in NSW
- how these will be further developed during the period of funding, and what the outcomes of this will be
- how the grant and the applicant will help to build and maintain capacity in cardiovascular research in NSW.

Important Considerations

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.

Note that outcomes and impacts may not be realised during the funded period, and they may be projected to occur in the 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 will be considered across five domains:

Domain 1: Knowledge Advancement

- 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: Capacity and 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: Heath and community

- Improved health outcomes, including:
    - change in the time to develop an outcome
    - change in the likelihood of an outcome occurring.

Domain 5: Economic benefit

- 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 health outcomes, clinical practice or health 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.

Appendix A contains two examples of translation pathways. Applicants may use their preferred framework.

Intellectual Property

To maximise benefits arising from the public funding of research, all recipients of Senior and EMC Researcher Grants must comply with the *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research* as a condition of funding. In addition, intellectual property (IP) arrangements should be agreed between all research partners and organisations. 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.

NSW Health has recently updated its Policy Directive *Intellectual Property arising from Health Research* which provides a clear and consistent guide for public health organisations to protect their intellectual property arising from research. NSW Health has also released a *Commercialisation Framework*. Both documents are available here.

Ethics and Regulation

The host organisation (and where appropriate the administering organisation) must certify that the project has received all appropriate research ethics and regulatory approvals and must ensure these are maintained as required for the duration of the grant. All organisations and personnel contributing to the project must:

- have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the NHMRC *Open Access Policy*, the *National Statement of the Ethical Conduct of Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (including but not limited to the application of the 3Rs 'replacement', 'reduction' and 'refinement' at all stages of animal care and use) or their replacements and other relevant National Health and Medical Research Council policies concerning the conduct of research and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies;
- comply with any requirements of relevant Commonwealth or State or Territory laws; and
- comply with any requirements of regulatory bodies that have jurisdiction over the project. This includes, but is not limited to, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

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 among others.

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 here.

Commercialisation Training Program

NSW Health has developed a training program in commercialisation, which grant recipients are required to complete during the funding period unless completed previously. The training will provide researchers with a high-level understanding of industry, its structure, corporate roles and the process of taking a product from a concept through to market. Specifically, researchers will understand the essential steps required to create successful therapeutics from a formulation, manufacturing, regulatory and reimbursement strategy point of view. At the completion of the course researchers will understand how to construct a target product profile and associated business case for a new therapeutic product.

Research collaborations and partnerships

Applicants are encouraged to identify and engage relevant stakeholders, partners and networks 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
- research networks
- non-government organisations
- industry
- consumers and patients.

Partnerships may vary in type and intensity from informal arrangements such as the provision of occasional advice, to membership of the research team or project steering committee, to formal partnerships that are the subject of a written agreement between the parties.

Where an industry organisation proposes to host a Senior or EMC researcher at their site, the following conditions apply and NSW Health reserves the right to cancel the funding agreement with the host/ administering organisation and recoup funds if they are not met:

- the host/ administering organisation must enter into a legally binding agreement with the partnering industry organisation to ensure their obligations are met including the following:
    - accommodate and support the researcher and ensure that the researcher has the support of the industry organisation's Chief Executive Officer or equivalent position
    - meet all standard employer responsibilities and obligations in accordance with relevant regulations and value gender equity in practice
    - provide cash and/or in-kind contributions to support the project, and
    - detail intellectual property arrangements in line with the NSW Health Policy and national principles (see page 10).

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

Step 3: Funding recommendation

The independent 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 determine grant recipients and amounts. All applicants will be informed as to whether they have been awarded funding.

Step 5: Grant Agreements

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

Post award 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 and financial acquittal following the conclusion of the term of the grant
- post-grant reports related to research translation and research impact.

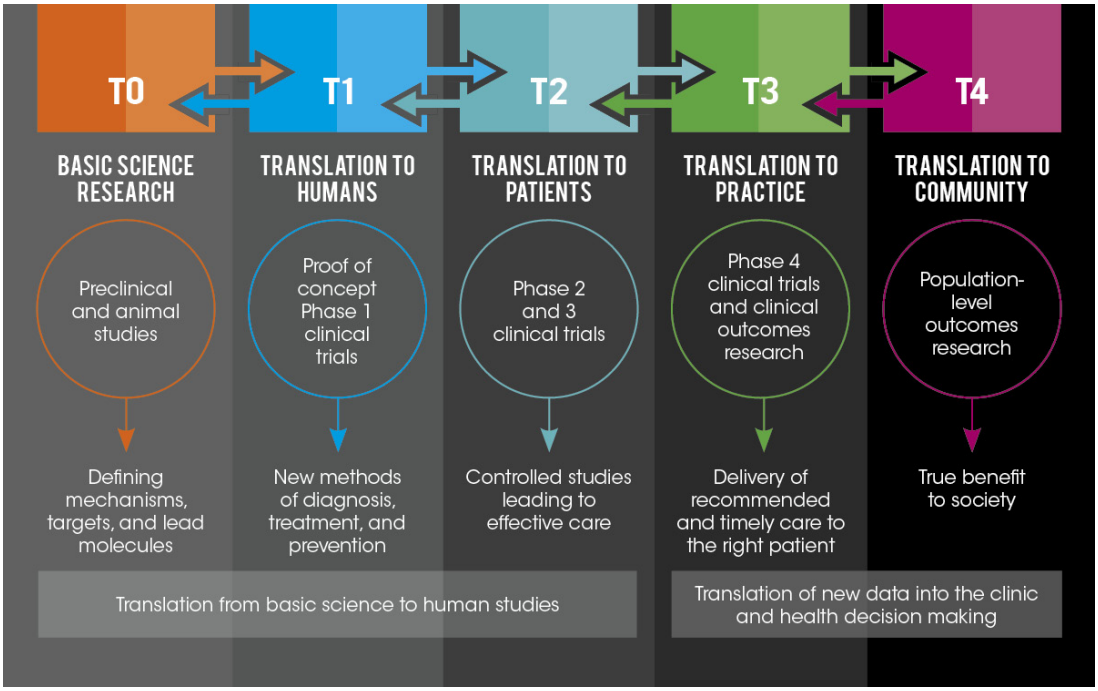
All grant recipients are expected to mentor a junior cardiovascular researcher. NSW Health may make contact to facilitate this arrangement.

Program evaluation

The Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program will periodically be assessed to ensure it is meeting its objectives. This will be done in collaboration with the host and administering organisations and funding recipients. Recipients and host/ administering organisations may be required to supply information and meet with NSW Health staff to support the evaluation of the Program.

Appendix A: Examples of Research Translation Frameworks

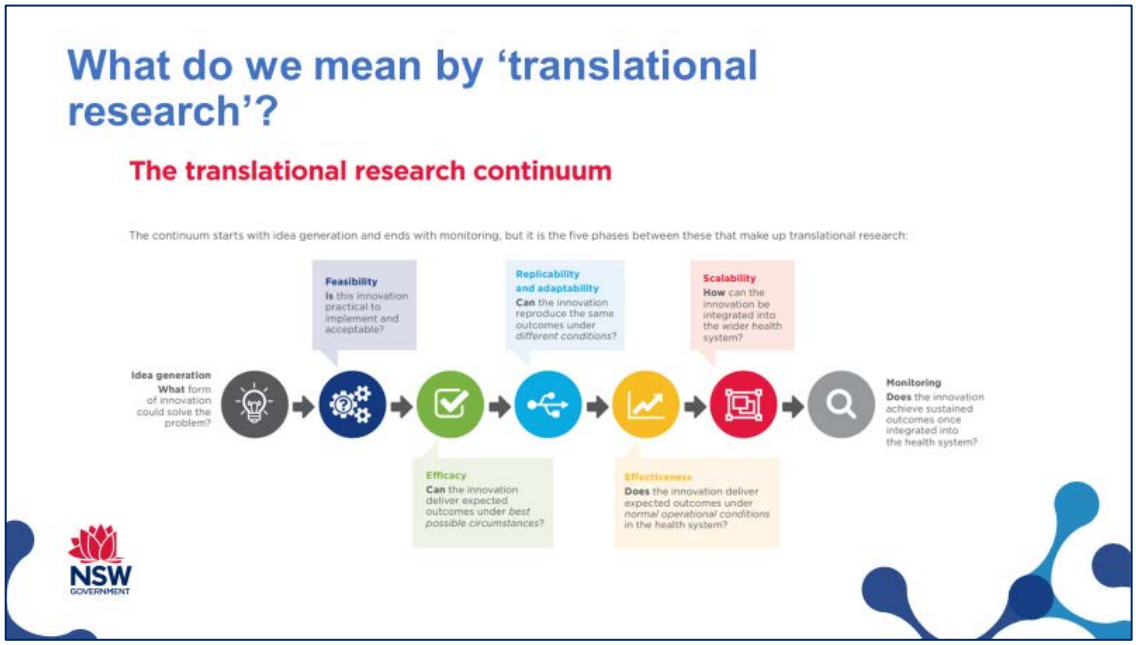
Example 1: Biomedical Research Translation Framework



Source: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Translational Research Institute

https://tri.uams.edu/about-tri/what-is-translational-research

Example 2: Health Services Research Translation Framework



Source: Developed by the Sax Institute for the Translational Research Grants Scheme