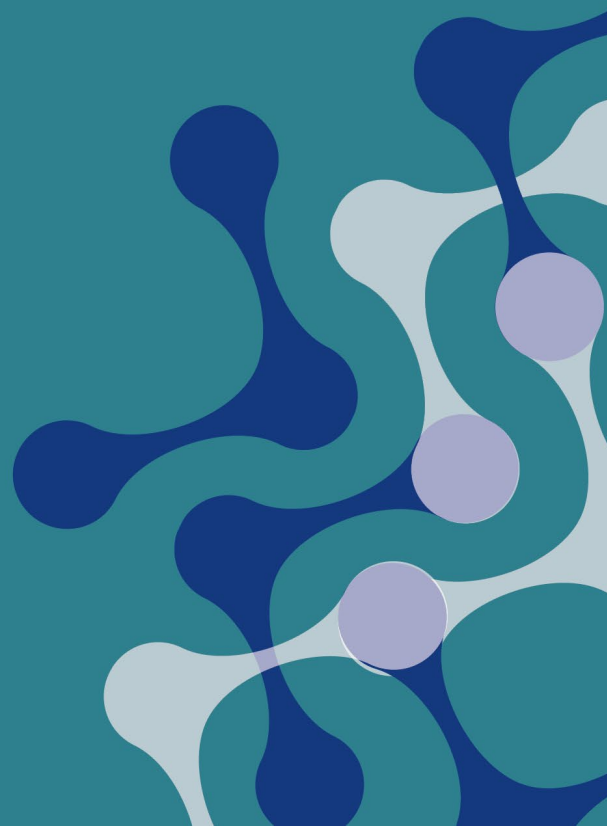


Office for Health and Medical Research

Elite Researcher Grants Guidelines

2025



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NSW Health

1 Reserve Road

St Leonards NSW 2065

(02) 9391 9228

www.health.nsw.gov.au

www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

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SHPN (OHMR) 250640

Call for nominations

NSW Health invites eligible host organisations to nominate researchers for an Elite Researcher Grant. Up to \$3 million is available in 2025-26 to fund up to four Elite Researcher Grants.

Funding for these grants will be provided for three-five-year research projects. Each grant will receive up to \$750,000 and hosts must match funds to a minimum of 50% of the grant awarded (in addition to any in-kind support provided).

Nominations will only be accepted from eligible host organisations and must be signed by the nominated elite researcher. Each host organisation may submit a maximum of one nomination. 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 these grants, an elite researcher is a researcher who:

- is currently living and working 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 highly-talented leader in their research field, with identified potential to undertake internationally significant research with high impact results in NSW
- has demonstrated capacity to lead a team and an innovative, high impact research program
- has demonstrated capacity as a Chief Investigator to secure grant funding
- has developed collaborations with other researchers in their given field
- has demonstrated involvement in research capacity building and leadership initiatives.

Objectives

Elite Researcher Grants aim to promote NSW as a global leader in research by attracting talented researchers to conduct research in NSW.

Elite Researcher Grants fund and incentivise talented researchers to move to NSW to:

- conduct pioneering and innovative research and drive discoveries with the long-term aim of improving health and wellbeing
- increase the national and international competitiveness of NSW 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
- leverage Australian Government funding opportunities to further research and its translation in NSW
- embed high-quality, innovative research in the NSW health system
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase research impact and translation.

Indicative timeline

Stage	Date
Call for nominations opens	July 2025
Intention to nominate due	1 December 2025
Nominations close	2 March 2026 5pm AEST
Outcomes notified	May 2026
Elite Researchers relocate to NSW and research projects commence	Within 12 months of award notification or by negotiation

Research priority areas

The funding will support elite researchers working and living overseas to relocate to NSW for the duration of the grant period.

No specific priority research areas have been nominated. However, host organisations will need to demonstrate why the research is important, why it is a priority for them and why it is a priority for NSW Health.

Research focused on cardiovascular health is not eligible for funding under this stream but funds are available under the [Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program](#).

Eligible areas of research

Funding will support researchers working across the research spectrum including in 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.

Submission of nominations

- *Intention to Nominate Forms* are due on 1 December 2025. Completed *Nomination Forms* are due on 2 March 2026. All forms and any additional documents should be submitted by email to moh-ohmrgrants@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm (AEST) on the relevant closing date.
- Host organisations must use the Elite Researcher Grants 2025 *Intention to Nominate Form* and *Nomination Form* available [here](#). Please submit both a WORD and PDF version of the nomination.
- All nominations will receive an email acknowledging receipt within 72 hours. It is the host organisation's responsibility to follow up if no acknowledgement is received.
- The maximum email file size is 20MB. Larger files will be rejected by the NSW Health server and you may not be notified that the email has been rejected.

Any queries may be directed by email to moh-ohmrgrants@health.nsw.gov.au.

Conditions of funding

Funding amounts

Elite Researcher Grants have a three-five year duration. A maximum total grant amount of \$750,000 will be awarded per grant.

Host organisations and other partners are expected to provide matching funds at a minimum of 50% of the grant awarded, separate to any in-kind contribution. See the section on host organisation requirements on page 6.

In addition, a one-off funding amount of up to \$10,000 for the researcher's relocation expenses (and up to another \$20,000 for family relocation expenses) may be available with appropriate justification. See page 12 for more information.

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Only one nomination will be accepted per host organisation.
2. Elite Researcher Grants are open to researchers who currently live and work overseas. Researchers already residing in Australia, even if on temporary visas, are not eligible.
3. Research funded through an Elite Researcher Grant must be conducted in the New South Wales public health system or an affiliated organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partner).
4. Elite Researcher Grants are one-line grants, not fellowships. Grants are for research projects or programs and can cover a combination of salaries of the elite researcher, research team, backfill for clinicians to quarantine research time, consumables and equipment.
5. Neither Elite Researcher Grant funding nor the required cash contribution from the host organisation may be spent on non-research activities such as teaching.
6. Neither Elite Researcher Grant funding nor the required cash contribution from the host organisation may 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.
7. Host organisations are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the subject area of the nomination. Nominations must clearly describe the purpose of the additional funding and justify that the additional research will be complementary not duplicative and is value for money.
8. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC funding, provided there is no duplication of research effort.

Clinical practice

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

If the Elite 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.

Eligibility criteria

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

Elite Researcher requirements

Moving from overseas to NSW

The researcher must not currently live or work in Australia but may be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia who has been living and working overseas. If funding is awarded, the researcher must move to NSW. The researcher must reside in NSW and be employed by an eligible host organisation for the full grant period.

Submit a complete nomination

The host organisation must complete the nomination form fully, attach all relevant and required documentation, agree to the declaration on the form and receive certification from the elite researcher, host and administering organisations and other parties if required.

Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

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.

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 that conducts health and medical research
- a local health district or other public health organisation.

The host organisation has a key role to play in supporting the elite researcher who will be moving to NSW from overseas.

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

The host organisation is required to provide additional in-kind and cash support to the project as outlined below:

- cash contribution of no less than 50% of the total grant funding and
- in-kind contribution - no specific percentage requirement however identification of in-kind support is strongly recommended to demonstrate the host organisation's support and commitment.

All support should be detailed in the nomination form and will be assessed against the selection criteria during the review process.

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

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

A statement of support signed by the chief executive 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 (cash and in-kind) by the host organisation.

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 the section on administering organisation requirements below.

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 grant 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

Nominee's track records will be assessed by expert reviewers against the selection criteria relative to opportunity, which means in the context of their career stage and personal circumstances. These circumstances might include career disruption due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities, as well as other relative to opportunity considerations as outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC's) Relative to Opportunity Policy, which can be accessed [here](#).

Nomination and assessment process

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

The nomination and assessment process is outlined below:

1. An eligible host organisation identifies a potential applicant.

2. The host organisation completes an *Intention to Nominate form* and submits it via email to moh-ohmrgrants@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm (AEST) on Monday 1 December 2025.
3. The host organisation completes a nomination using the *2025 Elite Researcher Grants Nomination Form* and submits it to NSW Health via email to moh-ohmrgrants@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm (AEST) on 2 March 2026. A maximum of one nomination may be submitted per host organisation*.
4. NSW Health assesses each nomination against the eligibility criteria.
5. All eligible nominations are assessed against the selection criteria by an expert panel, in collaboration with NSW Health, who may seek independent advice and verification regarding the nomination. This may include interviewing the proposed elite researcher and/or representatives of the host organisation, if required.
6. 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.
7. 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 one-nomination limit.

Selection criteria

All nominations that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

Nominations should be written in plain English.

Elite researcher (40%)

Elite researchers will be assessed against the following criteria:

- is a highly-talented leader in their research field, capable of undertaking internationally significant research with high impact results in NSW

- track record in research and research impact, relative to opportunity, directly related to the topic area(s) and methodology of the research project
- research, clinical and industry experience, including demonstrated capacity to develop, contribute to and lead multidisciplinary teams and a high impact research program
- the researcher is of exceptional international standard and has been specifically identified by the host organisation as a high-priority target for recruitment, aligning with existing research programs
- demonstrated capacity as a Chief Investigator to secure grant funding and deliver outcomes within the funded period
- demonstrated involvement in research capacity building and leadership initiatives, including contributions within the researcher's profession and the research community outside their current role
- experience in research projects that involve collaborations to bridge different disciplines and enhance competitiveness and innovation

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 and should contain the names and contact details of the referees.

Research project and team (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:

- value for money
- 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 a priority for the host organisation, a priority for NSW Health and

how it aligns with the host organisation's existing program of research.

- 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 health outcomes and the impact of the proposed research on this
- 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 its translation, and how each team member has the ability to contribute meaningfully to the research
- strong project governance structure with evidence of appropriate and sustainable relationships with key stakeholders including those who will likely use the research findings
- potential to achieve impact against one or more of the strategic outcomes of the [NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy](#).

Budget

The budget should be detailed and well-justified and will be assessed as part of the research project and team on:

- value for money
- appropriateness and purpose of each line item
- existing funding for the research, and how this relates to the additional funding requested without duplication
- other contributions and support for the project.

Leadership and capacity building (10%)

The nomination must provide a vision for leadership and capacity including:

- 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 research capacity in NSW.

Examples of leadership and capacity building activities include:

- leading a program of research with significant impact
- recruitment and retention of research staff
- mentoring and supervision of other researchers including creating opportunities for PhD and early-mid career researchers
- leading collaborations within NSW, Australia and internationally
- leading applications for national grant funding, including facilitating the involvement of junior researchers
- leading or active 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 success of this program depends on significant financial and non-financial support from host and partner organisations. Host and partner organisation support will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a minimum of 50% matched funding
- in-kind support including infrastructure, logistical and other support provided to the project
- alignment of the research project with current and proposed research within the host organisation and details of how a supportive environment will be provided for the researcher and the project.

Important considerations

NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy

Nominations are encouraged to consider the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy that is guiding the next five years of research and innovation in NSW 2025-2030. How does your proposed research question relate to NSW Health's vision for a vibrant research and innovation ecosystem that improves the experience of delivering and receiving care; system efficiency and sustainability; and equity in access and health outcomes? Please consider how the outcomes of your research complement or overlap with the six strategic outcomes identified in the strategy. More information is available [here](#).

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. A video explaining how to complete a program logic may be viewed [here](#).

Research impact assessment

The program logic is required at nomination stage 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.

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 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: Health 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. 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.

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 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.

Please refer to NSW Health's 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.

Equity of health outcomes

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 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 nomination, available [here](#).

Clinical trials

The NSW Government is committed to improving equity of access to clinical trials for people living in rural, regional and remote NSW and ACT. As part of this commitment, NSW Health's Office for Health and Medical Research is partnering with ACT Health to deliver the Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trials Enabling Program. This Program is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Medical Research Future Fund.

If your application involves a clinical trial, we encourage you to consider how patients in rural, regional and remote areas can participate. The Program team is committed to supporting equitable access to research and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate. Please contact the team to discuss the support available moh-rrr-ctep@health.nsw.gov.au. More information on the Program can be found [here](#).

Research collaborations and partnerships

Host organisations are strongly encouraged to identify and engage relevant stakeholders, partners and networks who will provide meaningful contributions to delivery of the research project and implementation of outcomes.

Partners may include:

- NSW Health system partners including NSW Ministry of Health, pillars, statewide health services, and Agency for Clinical Innovation networks
- 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 Health 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.

For assistance with engaging with a NSW Ministry of Health policy branch, please contact MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au.

Partner statements of support

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

Selection process

Step 1: Eligibility check

Following the closing date for nominations, NSW Health will determine if each nomination has satisfied the eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Review by expert panel

An independent expert review panel will assess each eligible nomination against the selection criteria.

Step 3: Funding recommendation

The expert review panel will agree on the final ranking of all eligible nominations and will make recommendations regarding funding to NSW Health.

Step 4: Decision and notification

NSW Health will determine grant recipients and amounts. All host organisations will be informed as to whether they have been awarded funding.

Step 5: Grant agreements

NSW Health will contact host and 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 Elite Researchers are expected to mentor one or more junior researchers. NSW Health may make contact to facilitate this arrangement.

Program evaluation

NSW Health grant programs are periodically assessed to ensure they are meeting their objectives. This is done in collaboration with host/ 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.

Reimbursement of relocation costs

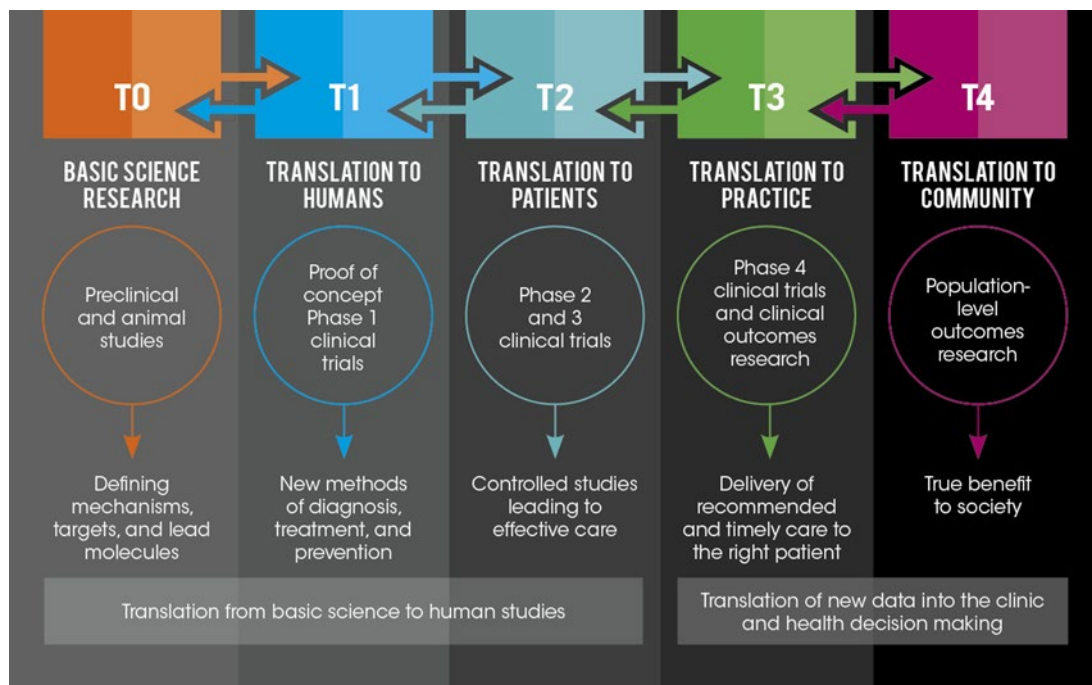
A copy of the *NSW Health Relocation Costs Claim Form* will be provided to successful recipients.

NSW Health will accept applications for reimbursement for relocation costs under the following rules:

- NSW Health will pay any funds to the administering organisation, not to the provider or applicant directly. The administering organisation will then reimburse the applicant.
- Reimbursement of relocation costs is available to recipients of the Elite Researcher Grants and their immediate families only.
- Evidence of three quotes or other price comparison must be attached to the form. Dates must match actual travel dates.
- If the application is successful, NSW Health will pay the lowest price quoted. Top up funding (for example, to fly business class) may be paid by the recipient or host/ administering organisation.
- A copy of the original official receipt for payment for services must be provided when available. Reimbursement will not be provided until this has been supplied. Other evidence to support the application may also be requested.
- Items which may be considered for funding include:
 - packing and unpacking services
 - removalist costs
 - flights (economy, one flight per person, one way to Sydney).
- Other relocation costs are not eligible.

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

