

2019

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

—
**Synergy Seeding
Grants**

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/

Call for applications

NSW Health invites applications for **Synergy Seeding Grants**. In 2019-20, funds are available to support the development of high quality applications led by NSW-based cardiovascular researchers for National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Synergy Grants. Seeding grant recipients will be funded up to \$250,000 for 12 months, with NHMRC Synergy Grant applications to be lodged in 2021 (subject to NHMRC closing dates). 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.

Timeline

Synergy Seeding Grants 2019-20	
Call for applications	1 October 2019
Applications close	3 December 2019
Announcement of successful applicants & commencement of funding	March 2020
Submission of Synergy Grant Application to NHMRC*	May 2021

*NHMRC timelines for 2021 are yet to be confirmed

Synergy Seeding Grants

Objectives

Synergy Seeding Grants will support the development of high quality cardiovascular research applications led by NSW-based researchers for National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Synergy Grants.

The key objective of the Grants is to position multidisciplinary collaborations led by NSW-based cardiovascular researchers to successfully apply for NHMRC Synergy Grants in 2021 to commence in 2022.

Secondary objectives are to:

- support the development of multidisciplinary and diverse collaborations led by NSW-based cardiovascular researchers
- position those collaborations to compete for other national and international cardiovascular research opportunities, including forthcoming opportunities under the Medical Research Future Fund's (MRFF's) Mission for Cardiovascular Health, Australian Research Council grants and other NHMRC grants.

Scope of cardiovascular research

The NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program funds research in biomedical, clinical, health services and population health 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
- major independent risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- cardiovascular complications of diabetes and obesity
- rheumatic heart disease
- congenital heart disease.

Synergy Seeding Grants

A Synergy Seeding Grant may be used in a variety of ways including to support:

- development of a multidisciplinary team by providing an opportunity for members to work together
- data collection and/ or data linkage to inform the NHMRC Synergy Grant application
- development of a prototype for a product or program
- initial collaborative research
- submission of a joint publication by the multidisciplinary collaboration.

NHMRC Synergy Grants

- Applicants must refer to the NHMRC website for more information about Synergy Grants: www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/find-funding/synergy-grants.
- The website also contains a link to Grant Connect where the *2019 Synergy Grant Guidelines* and *Guide to Applicants* are located. Although 2019 applications have now closed, these documents contain useful information for researchers considering applying for a NSW Synergy Seeding Grant.
- Applications for Synergy Seeding Grants will be assessed against the **eligibility** and **assessment** criteria below. These are informed by the criteria

for NHMRC Synergy Grants because applicants must demonstrate either that they already meet the NHMRC criteria, or that they will do so in 12 months with the support of the Seeding Grant.

Assessment of applications

Eligibility criteria for Synergy Seeding Grants

Eligibility of Chief Investigator

To be eligible for a NSW Synergy Seeding Grant, the Chief Investigator must meet all of the following criteria:

- intend to apply for an NHMRC Synergy Grant in 2021
- be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or have an appropriate work visa
- reside in or plan to move to NSW for the duration of both the Seeding and Synergy grants
- be employed by a NSW-based:
 - medical research institute
 - university
 - non-government organisation.
- submit a complete application
- demonstrate that their multidisciplinary collaboration (4-10 Chief Investigators) meets or will meet all eligibility criteria for an NHMRC Synergy Grant within 12 months including:
 - Australian citizenship, residency or work visa requirements
 - Limits on the number of NHMRC grants applied for and held
 - Requirement that the Synergy Grant application is made by an NHMRC-approved Administering Institution.

Eligibility of host organisation

To be eligible for a Synergy Seeding Grant, the host organisation must be a medical research institute, university or non-government organisation located in NSW and must be willing to:

- Accept and administer the Synergy Seeding Grant funds.
- Employ the Chief Investigator for the duration of the seeding grant.
- Provide the appropriate infrastructure support for the research project, including wet/dry lab space, computer equipment, desk space etc.

Assessment criteria for NHMRC Synergy Grants

Applicants for a Synergy Seeding Grant must intend to apply for an NHMRC Synergy Grant in 2021. The

selection criteria for NSW Synergy Seeding Grants reflect the assessment criteria for NHMRC's Synergy Grants. Some aspects of the NHMRC selection criteria may be strengthened or met as a result of the work undertaken during the funding period of the Synergy Seeding Grant. Selection criteria for NHMRC Synergy Grants are summarised below.

Criterion	Definition	NHMRC weighting
Track record	The value of an individual's past research achievement, relative to opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publications (20%) • research impact (15%) • leadership (5%). 	40%
Knowledge gain	The quality of the proposed research and significance of the knowledge gained.	30%
Synergy	The quality of a diverse team's multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to solving a major health and medical research question, while building workforce capacity. For Synergy Grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary: research by teams that integrate information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, methodologies and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve questions whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice. • Multidisciplinary approach: includes multiple methods across a range of research disciplines including social sciences, policy analysis, economics, engineering, mathematics and physical sciences. • Diversity of research team: diversity in terms of career stage, gender and ethnicity. NHMRC also values collaborations with stakeholders who have direct experience and knowledge or are direct beneficiaries of the research. Applications should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the type(s) of diversity fostered and how it will enhance the outcomes of the project and its scientific quality, including why the research question cannot be addressed without the proposed personnel. ○ how the team will contribute to the capacity building, mentoring, career development and diversification of the research workforce. 	30%

Further information about eligibility for NHMRC Synergy Grants can be found in the Synergy Grant 2019 Guidelines on the Grant Connect website. Note that the Guidelines may be revised for future rounds and the latest available version should be used.

Submission of Applications

Applicants must use the Synergy Seeding Grant Application Form and include the required supporting evidence. The form is available at:

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

All applications should be submitted by email to MOH-OHMR@health.nsw.gov.au.

Submission dates are below. Answers to frequently asked questions are available on the Cardiovascular Grants webpage. Please check the website regularly at: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/.

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

Selection criteria for NSW Synergy Seeding Grants

Applications must:

- Outline the major research question that will be the focus of their Synergy Grant application.
- Describe the capacity of their multidisciplinary collaboration to meet the NHMRC selection criteria for a Synergy Grant within 12 months.
- Identify proposed targeted activities to strengthen the application for an NHMRC Synergy Grant.
- Detail the program of work, project plan and budget that will take place during the Seeding Grant and how this will position the collaboration to be awarded an NHMRC Synergy Grant in 2021.

In assessing applications, the review panel will consider the following criteria:

1. **Proposed collaboration and project meets NHMRC Synergy Selection criteria** [Application form Section 2]
 - Track record of collaboration members according to NHMRC Synergy criteria, including publications, research impact, and research leadership.
 - Importance, timeliness and appropriateness of the proposed major research question, including how it will advance knowledge, policy and/or practice, and why the question cannot be answered by a single investigator.
 - Synergy of the proposed collaboration according to NHMRC criteria.

2. **Relevance of the proposed collaboration and project to NSW** [Application form Section 3]
 - Alignment of proposed Synergy research with State and National Priorities, such as NSW Health priorities, Premier's priorities, NHMRC and MRFF priorities.
 - Alignment of the proposed research with current research programs in NSW, including those of the Host Organisation.
 - Additional and ongoing benefits of this collaboration to the researchers, Host Organisation and NSW.
3. **Value and feasibility of proposed NSW Synergy Seeding Grant activities** [Application form Section 4]
 - Quality, significance and feasibility of proposed seeding grant research program.
 - Value of the proposed seeding grant activities in increasing capacity within the 12 month funding period, above what could be achieved without additional funding.
 - Appropriateness of the proposed budget.

Program logic

Applicants are required to submit a program logic diagram with their application, including an overview of the project aim, inputs, activities, outputs, and short and long term outcomes. The program logic relates to the proposed NHMRC Synergy Project, and will enable reviewers to assess the quality, feasibility and potential impacts of the proposed program of research.

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

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 under-represented, higher risk and priority populations where appropriate. These may include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people 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 focus on Aboriginal health should attach a completed Aboriginal Health Impact Statement to their application, available at https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2017_034.pdf.

Selection process

Step 1: Eligibility check

NSW Health will assess whether each application satisfies ALL of the eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Review by independent expert panel

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

Step 3: Funding recommendation

The review panel will agree on the final ranking of all eligible applications, and will make recommendations regarding 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 contact successful applicants and enter into funding agreements with the host organisation.

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Successful applicants must agree to apply for an NHMRC Synergy Grant in 2020-21 and must provide evidence of that application to NSW Health.
2. Successful applicants must supply the results of any grant applications from this project including an NHMRC Synergy Grant application to NSW Health. This should include outcome, score and any feedback, and will support evaluation of the NSW Synergy Seeding Grants.
3. Research funded under NSW Synergy Seeding Grants must be led by a researcher based in New South Wales at a host organisation who meets the eligibility criteria (university, medical research institute, non-government organisation).
4. NSW Synergy Seeding Grant funds must not be spent on capital works, general maintenance costs, organisational infrastructure or overheads, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment, such as desks and chairs, rent or the cost of utilities.
5. Applicants are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the subject area of the application.

Reporting requirements

The host organisation will enter into a funding agreement with NSW Health that sets out the obligations of both parties and will contain a schedule of reporting requirements.

Grant recipients may be asked to meet with staff of NSW Health from time to time during the funding period. Meetings with recipients will facilitate feedback and inform the future direction of the grants program.