



**Australian Government**

**National Health and Medical Research Council**

## Investigator Grants 2019 Guidelines

<b>Opening date:</b>	05 December 2018
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	17.00 AEDT on 06 February 2019
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
<b>Commonwealth Co-sponsoring entity</b>	Department of Health
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <p>Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au">help@nhmrc.gov.au</a></p> <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries later than 16.30 AEDT on 06 February 2019.</p> <p>Note: The Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within two working days. This timeframe may be delayed during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p>
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	26 July 2018
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Targeted competitive

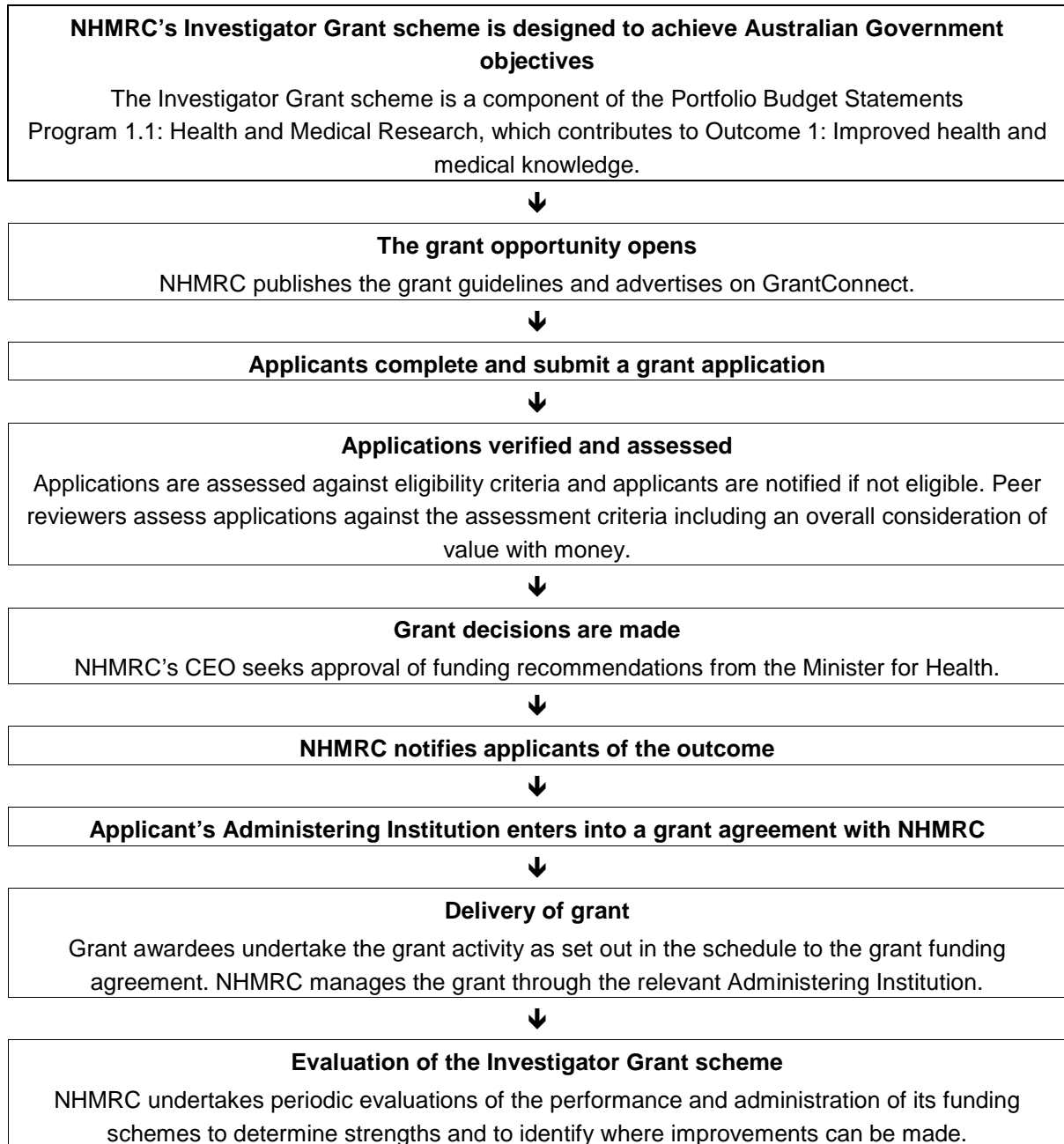
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# 1 Investigator Grants 2019 processes



## 1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Investigator Grants 2019 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

GrantConnect ([www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

The Investigator Grants 2019 grant opportunity will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

### 1.1.1 About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and integrity of, health and medical research. The Investigator Grant scheme is a component of the Portfolio Budget Statement Program 1.1: Health and Medical Research, which contributes to Outcome 1: Improved health and medical knowledge. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) and the CGRGs.

NHMRC awards grants through several research funding schemes to advance health and medical knowledge and to improve the health status of all Australians. NHMRC invests in the highest quality research and researchers, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research.

## 2 About the grant program

The objective of the Investigator Grant scheme is to support the research program of outstanding investigators at all career stages. It will consolidate separate salary and research support into a single grant scheme by offering a salary component (if required) and a research support package (RSP).

The expected outcomes are:

- flexibility for investigators to pursue important new research directions as they arise and to form collaborations as needed
- innovative and creative research
- opportunities for researchers at all career stages to establish their own research programs, and
- reduced application and peer review burden on researchers.

To support its objective, the Investigator Grant scheme comprises two categories – Emerging Leadership (EL) and Leadership (L) (**Table1**).

The EL Category is restricted to researchers who are ≤10 years post-PhD or equivalent and comprises two salary levels, EL1 and EL2, with corresponding RSPs. Recipients of Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants will have the title “NHMRC Emerging Leadership Fellow”.

The L Category comprises three salary levels (L1, L2 and L3) with four tiers of RSP (LT1, LT2, LT3 and LT4). The tier of RSP is not tied to the level of salary (refer to section 3). Recipients of Leadership Investigator Grants will have the title “NHMRC Leadership Fellow”.

**Table 1.** Structure of the Investigator Grant scheme

	<b>Salary</b>	<b>RSP</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>Tiers</b>	<b>Title</b>
Leadership	L3	LT4	NHMRC Leadership Fellow
	L2	LT3	
		LT2	
	L1	LT1	
Emerging Leadership	EL2	ELT2	NHMRC Emerging Leadership Fellow
	EL1	ELT1	

Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants

Each Level of the EL Category (EL1 and EL2) can only be held once (see **Table 2**).

Leadership Investigator Grants

Leadership Investigator Grants can be held for a total of five terms<sup>1</sup> across the three Levels of the Category. However, the number of terms each Level can be held is limited (see **Table 2**):

- Leadership Level (L1) can be held for a maximum of two terms
- Leadership Level 2 (L2) can be held for a maximum of two terms, and
- Leadership Level 3 (L3) can be held for a maximum of five terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Two terms at L1 + one term at L2 + two terms at L3 = 5 terms in total  
Five terms at L3 = 5 terms in total

**Table 2.** Number of terms each Investigator Grant Level can be held

Category	Levels	Number of terms	Maximum number of terms for each Category
Leadership	L3	5	5
	L2	2	
	L1	2	
Emerging Leadership	EL2	1	2
	EL1	1	

## 2.1 NHMRC strategic priorities, Investigator Grants 2019 priorities and funding with other organisations

NHMRC's Corporate Plan (the Plan) outlines strategic priorities and major health issues for the period covered by the Plan, including how NHMRC will address these issues, and a national strategy for medical research and public health research. NHMRC strategic priorities are outlined in [Appendix A](#).

Information on Investigator Grants priorities and Investigator Grants funding with other organisations is also outlined in [Appendix A](#).



### 3 Grant amount and grant period

#### 3.1 Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the Investigator Grants 2019 grant opportunity is estimated to be between \$340 million and \$380 million. NHMRC’s Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes.

Investigator Grants comprise a Research Support Package (RSP) and a salary component (see **Table 3**). The salary component of Investigator Grants is provided as a contribution to assist Administering Institutions with employing the successful applicant. However, an Investigator Grant recipient’s total salary is agreed through negotiation between the researcher and their Administering Institution.

The RSP component of Investigator Grants is tiered. The RSP for EL grants is set<sup>2</sup> whereas that for L1-L3 grants depends on the total overall score that an application receives during peer review<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3.** Investigator Grant salary and RSP components

Category	Salary		RSP	
	Levels	Amount per annum	Tiers	Amount per annum
Leadership	L3	\$175,201	LT4	\$600,000
	L2	\$164,911	LT3	\$500,000
			LT2	\$400,000
L1	\$141,474	LT1	\$300,000	
Emerging Leadership	EL2	\$107,750	ELT2	\$200,000
	EL1	\$75,738	ELT1	\$50,000

Note: Salary amount noted in table will be indexed and provided on a pro-rata basis for part-time awardees.

The Category, Level and RSP of the grant will apply for the duration of the grant.

<sup>2</sup> For example, a EL1 grant receives an RSP at Tier “ELT1”.

<sup>3</sup> For example, a L1 grant recipient may be awarded a LT4 RSP and, conversely, a L3 recipient may be awarded a LT1 RSP.

### 3.1.1 Short-term support to Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks

Funding to facilitate international Indigenous researcher networks (FIIRN supplement) is available to Emerging Leadership (EL1 and EL2) grant recipients who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The purpose of this funding is to:

- improve the health of Indigenous people through research between NHMRC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Health Research Council of New Zealand, as intended under the Tripartite Agreement, and
- support NHMRC's strategic objective of building capacity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

Applicants who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander may request the FIIRN supplement (\$11,000 in addition to their Investigator Grant) to support travel to international conferences and/or short term international collaborative activities. Travel to New Zealand or Canada is particularly encouraged.

Eligible applicants who wish to be considered for the FIIRN supplement must indicate their interest at the time of application and will be unable to request the supplement at a later date. Where the number of eligible applicants for the FIIRN supplement exceeds NHMRC's allocated funds to this program (\$100,000), NHMRC will offer each eligible applicant a pro rata share of the available funding.

To receive the FIIRN funding, applicants must:

- identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent (see information on [AIATSIS website](#)),
- indicate their interest in receiving FIIRN funding at the time of application, and outline, in their grant application, their proposed use of the funds for travel and/or for collaborative purposes.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence, consistent with AIATSIS guidance, of an applicant's identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and must provide this evidence to NHMRC, if requested.

Investigator Grant recipients who receive FIIRN funding must report on the following in their Final Report:

- what the FIIRN funding was used for, and
- the mentoring linkages established as a result of using this funding supplement.

## 3.2 Grant period

An Investigator Grants 2019 grant opportunity is awarded for a five year term, irrespective of:

- the Category or Level of grant awarded, and
- whether the grant is awarded as a full-time or part-time grant (section 3.3).

## 3.3 Time commitment

An Investigator Grant may be awarded as either a full-time grant or a part-time grant.

### 3.3.1 Full-time Investigator Grants

Full-time Investigator Grants are intended to support researchers to conduct research on a full-time basis (i.e. as 1.0 full-time equivalent; FTE). Researchers receiving a full-time salary must devote at least 80% of their time to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the Investigator Grant.

### 3.3.2 Part-time Investigator Grants (Professional)

Investigator Grants awarded on a part-time basis for professional reasons ('Professional Part-Time Grants') are intended to allow researchers to conduct research while maintaining other professional activities. These grants are available for 0.2 to 0.8 FTE over five years. The salary component of the grant will be adjusted pro rata.

Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant applicants must hold, or have been offered, another funded position (e.g. in policy, industry, clinical, public health or equivalent practice, teaching) and their employer must guarantee to release the Investigator Grant recipient for the time specified in their grant application to conduct research. Similarly, self-employed applicants must confirm that they are able to conduct the research.

Continuation of the Investigator Grant will depend on continued financial support by the employer for the balance of the applicant's work time and for the duration of the grant.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence:

- of the Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant applicant's alternative funded position
- that the alternative employer will release the applicant to conduct the research proposed in their Investigator Grant application, and
- that the alternative employer will continue to provide salary to support the applicant's non-research time.

This evidence must be available to NHMRC if requested. Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant recipients may retain 100% of their RSP. Researchers may select this option at the time of application or convert it during the course of the grant (see section 10.7.4). At application or upon request for conversion, the researcher must indicate whether they wish to receive 100% of their Investigator Grant RSP or reduce it in proportion to their part-time status<sup>4</sup>.

The combined time spent on research and on other professional activities by Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant recipients must equate to up to 1.0 FTE, except where there is a career disruption. In this case, the 1.0 FTE requirement towards research and professional activities is reduced in proportion to the time component of the career disruption. For the research component of a Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant, 80% of that time must be devoted to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the Investigator Grant<sup>5</sup>.

Professional Part-Time Investigator Grants are to be held part-time, at the indicated FTE, for the duration of the grant. They cannot be converted to a full-time grant.

### 3.3.3 Part-time Investigator Grants (Personal)

In circumstances defined as career disruptions (see [Appendix B](#)), researchers may receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situation and conducting research. These grants are available for 0.2 to 0.8 FTE over five years and fund the amount of time allocated to research. The value of the salary will be adjusted pro rata. Applications for personal part-time FTE must be supported by their employer. Administering Institutions must retain evidence

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<sup>4</sup> For example, if an applicant chooses to receive a Part-Time Investigator grant at 0.2 FTE and to reduce their RSP in proportion to their FTE, they would receive 20% of the RSP.

<sup>5</sup> For example, if the research component of a Part-Time Investigator Grant is 0.6 FTE, then 80% (0.48 FTE) of the research component of the grant recipient's time must be directed towards research.

to confirm that the Investigator Grant recipient's requested FTE is for circumstances defined as a career disruption(s) and provide this evidence to NHMRC if requested.

The non-research time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a researcher's personal circumstances and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities.

Researchers may select this option at the time of application, or convert to it (see section 10.7.4) during the course of the grant. At application, or upon request for conversion, the researcher must indicate whether they wish to retain 100% of the Investigator Grant RSP or reduce it to the part-time FTE level (e.g. 0.2 FTE and 20% of RSP).

When the personal part-time option is taken, the researcher must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the grant<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.3.4 Other appointments

The Investigator Grant scheme must not pay or subsidise the salary of grantees with additional institutional leadership/administrative appointments related to research. Funding of these roles is the responsibility of the institution. NHMRC reserves the right to suspend or cease any Investigator Grant if, in its judgement, this policy intent is being compromised.

Applicants who hold the following positions may apply for an Investigator Grant but are not eligible for salary support if they hold:

- a full-time academic teaching and research role
- roles where the overarching responsibility is leadership of an independent Medical Research Institute (e.g. Director, or Chief Executive Officer (CEO))
- roles where the overarching responsibility is leadership of an institute or centre under university or hospital governance (e.g. Director or CEO), or
- academic administrative roles such as Dean, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor.

The salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid if, on 1 January of the year an Investigator Grant is to commence, or through the life of the grant, a grantee holds any of the positions (or similar) listed above. The RSP component of the grant will not be affected.

If an Investigator Grant recipient temporarily holds any of the positions (or similar) listed above, the grantee may suspend the grant as outlined in section 10.7.2.1.

Any appointments held by an Investigator Grant recipient are subject to review by NHMRC at any time throughout the duration of the grant.

### 3.3.5 Time spent overseas

Investigator Grant recipients may spend a proportion of their time pursuing research overseas.

#### 3.3.5.1 Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants

To allow flexibility and support early and mid-career researchers to access training and development opportunities overseas, EL1 and EL2 Investigator Grant recipients may spend up to 50% of their grant's duration overseas. However, the final two years of the Investigator Grant must

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<sup>6</sup> For example, if the research component is 0.6 FTE then 0.48 FTE (i.e. 80% of the research component) must be directed towards research.

be undertaken in Australia. Administering Institutions must retain evidence that the Investigator Grant recipient is in Australia for the final two years of the grant and provide this to NHMRC if requested.

The RSP component of the grant must be used to continue to support the researcher's research program in Australia.

#### 3.3.5.2 Leadership Investigator Grants

Leadership Investigator Grant (L1-L3) recipients must be based in Australia for at least 80% of the grant's duration.

#### 3.3.6 NHMRC Research Fellowship sixth year extensions

There are no sixth year extensions to Investigator Grants.

Recipients of a NHMRC Research Fellowship who are in the final year of a fellowship for which funding commenced in 2015 or earlier and who are unsuccessful with their Investigator Grant application will be considered for a sixth year of funding, which will be added to their current NHMRC Research Fellowship.

This policy enables transition from the current NHMRC Research Fellowship scheme to the Investigator Grant scheme.

Sixth year extensions to NHMRC Research Fellowships will only be considered if the Investigator Grant application achieves a defined overall threshold score.

## 4 Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC approved Administering Institutions and NHMRC's Administering Institution policy are available on [NHMRC's website](#).

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) and Administering Institution must ensure applications meet all eligibility requirements, as set out in these guidelines, at the time of submission. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be ruled ineligible and may be excluded from further consideration.

An eligibility ruling may be made by NHMRC at any stage following the close of applications, including during peer review. Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information in order to assess whether the eligibility requirement has been met. Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants.

Grant offers may be withdrawn and action taken over the life of a grant, if eligibility criteria to accept and/or continue holding a grant are not met.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before an application is submitted.

### 4.1 Chief Investigator

The maximum number of Chief Investigators (CIs) allowed on an Investigator Grants 2019 application is one (the CIA).

#### **Chief Investigator 'A' (CIA)**

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the Funding Period, except for NHMRC Emerging Leader Fellows, who must be based in Australia for at least 50% of the Funding Period.

The CIA must:

- only submit one application for an Investigator Grant in a given funding round
- select only one Category and one Level of Investigator Grant.

The CIA should consider the *Statement of Expectations* ([Appendix C](#)) to determine the most appropriate Level to apply for and submit an application at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile.

## 4.2 Qualifications

NHMRC expects that EL and L applicants will hold a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), or a research qualification equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013, or equivalent research experience.

If the CIA holds a research higher degree which is not a PhD or has equivalent research experience, the applicant's Administering Institution must confirm that, in its judgement, the applicant's qualification or research experience meets the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013 and must provide evidence of that judgement, if requested by NHMRC. NHMRC reserves the right, at any time during the application or peer review process, to exclude applicants who, in its judgement, do not have appropriate qualifications or experience.

## 4.3 Multiple applications/grants

Limits apply to the number of NHMRC grants that a CI may concurrently hold and/or apply for.

It is the responsibility of the CI to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements for concurrent research applications and/or grants prior to the submission of an application and that they maintain their eligibility for the duration of the peer review period.

Eligibility to apply for, and hold, an Investigator Grant is linked to numbers of grants applied for or held from the Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes, as well as other NHMRC grants held.

CIs may submit a total of two applications across the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes in any given funding round<sup>7</sup>. See specific rules relating to Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes.

CIs may hold a maximum of two grants concurrently from the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes, with the following exceptions:

- CIs who hold two Ideas Grants may hold a Synergy Grant, and
- CIs who hold two Ideas Grants may apply for and hold an Investigator Grant.

Refer to [Appendix D \(eligibility for 2019 funding round\)](#) and the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

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<sup>7</sup> For example, in the 2019 funding round for funding commencing in 2020 (subject to other scheme-specific eligibility requirements), CIs may submit 1x Synergy Grant application + 1x Ideas Grant application = 2 applications in total.

If an Investigator Grant CIA submits an Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grant application(s) in excess of the maximum for which they are eligible to apply, all Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grant applications on which that CI is named may be ineligible and excluded from consideration, irrespective of:

- the scheme to which they have applied, and
- that CI's position or role on the application.

Refer to [Appendix D \(eligibility for 2019 funding round\)](#) and the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

#### 4.3.1 Ideas Grants affect Investigator Grant applications

If a CI concurrently (in the same funding round) applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered. As a consequence, the Ideas Grant will not be eligible for funding. Refer to [Appendix D \(eligibility for 2019 funding round\)](#) and the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

If CIs who hold one or two Ideas Grants are awarded an Investigator Grant, the RSP will be reduced by 50% for each Ideas Grant held. Each reduction to the RSP will cease as each grant(s) that led to the reduction expires<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4.3.2 Reductions in the Research Support Package (RSP) for concurrently held Project or Program Grants

If an Investigator Grant application is successful, the value of the RSP will be reduced for concurrently held NHMRC Project and/or Program Grants as follows:

- 25% for each concurrent NHMRC Project Grant held, to a maximum of 50%, and
- 100% for a concurrent NHMRC Program Grant.

Each reduction to the RSP will cease as each grant(s) that led to the reduction expires<sup>9</sup>. Refer to [Appendix D \(eligibility for 2019 funding round\)](#) and the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

#### 4.4 Current and/or former NHMRC Fellowship recipients

Current NHMRC Fellows may apply for an Investigator Grant if, at the time of application, their NHMRC Fellowship will end before, or be in its final year on, 1 January of the year the Investigator Grant is to commence. Refer to [Appendix D \(eligibility for 2019 funding round\)](#) and the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

If the first year of the Investigator Grant overlaps with the final year of a NHMRC fellowship, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid during the overlap (i.e. the period that both grants are held). During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the NHMRC fellowship and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced

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<sup>8</sup> An Investigator Grant RSP will be reduced by 100% if the grantee concurrently holds two Ideas Grants. 50% of the Investigator Grant RSP starting value will be provided after the first Ideas Grant expires and the remaining 50% of the Investigator Grant RSP will be provided on expiry of the second Ideas Grant.

<sup>9</sup> An Investigator Grant RSP will be reduced by 50% if the grantee concurrently holds two Project Grants. Of this, 25% of the Investigator Grant RSP value will be provided after the first Project Grant expires and the remaining 25% of the Investigator Grant RSP will be provided on expiry of the second Project Grant.

accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected.

Current or previous NHMRC Fellowship recipients cannot apply for an Investigator Grant at a Level lower than the applicant's most recently held NHMRC Fellowship ([Appendix E](#)). Previously held NHMRC Fellowships will not count towards the number of terms an Investigator Grant can be held (see section 2).

Recipients of Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Clinical Researchers program Fellowships will be considered equivalent to NHMRC Fellowship recipients. Relevant conditions and policies outlined in these Grant Guidelines will be applicable to MRFF Clinical Researchers program Fellowships.

A summary of the Investigator Grant Category and Level for which NHMRC Fellowship recipients (previous and current) are eligible to apply is at [Appendix E](#).

#### 4.5 Australian Government Grants that are not funded by NHMRC

Recipients of an Investigator Grant salary are not entitled to concurrently receive salary from any other Australian Government funded grant (e.g. Australian Research Council Fellowship, Medical Research Future Fund Fellowship and Project Grant Personnel Support Package).

A CI who receives a salary from an Australian Government funded grant can only apply for an Investigator Grant if, on 1 January of the year the Investigator Grant is to commence, the other Australian Government grant will have ended or be in its final year.

If the first year of the Investigator Grant overlaps with the final year of the other Australian Government grant, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid during the overlap (i.e. the period that both grants are held). During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the Australian Government grant and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected.

A CI who receives an Investigator Grant salary and who is subsequently awarded another Australian Government grant that includes a salary component cannot receive both salary components. Such grant recipients must notify NHMRC if they are successful in obtaining an Australian Government grant that includes a salary.

CIs may not suspend an Investigator Grant for the purposes of taking up another Australian Government grant.

CIs whose Investigator Grant is funded by MRFF will be considered equivalent to NHMRC Investigator Grant recipients. Relevant conditions and policies outlined in these Grant Guidelines will be applicable to MRFF-funded Investigator Grants.

Recipients of an Investigator Grant without a salary component may hold a salary from another Australian Government grant, depending on the rules of that granting body.

#### 4.6 Grants that are not funded by NHMRC or the Australian Government

Recipients of grants that are not funded by NHMRC or the Australian Government ("non-Australian Government grants") and that include a salary component (e.g. Viertel Charitable Foundation Senior Medical Research Fellowship, Cancer Council Victoria Postdoctoral Fellowship) may apply for a NHMRC Investigator Grant in any year during the term of this non-Australian Government grant. If successful, and the total value of the salary from the non-Australian Government grant is greater than 20% of the total value of the salary component of the awarded Investigator Grant, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid. During the period of overlap, the



Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the non-Australian Government grant and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected and the recipient may continue to receive any research support their non-Australian Government grant provides.

A CI who receives an Investigator Grant salary and who is subsequently awarded a non-Australian Government grant that includes a salary component that is greater than 20% of the total value of the Investigator Grant salary cannot receive both salary components. Such grant recipients must notify NHMRC if they are successful in obtaining a non-Australian Government grant of this type.

If the total salary from the non-Australian Government grant is less than or equal to 20% of the total salary component of the Investigator Grant, the grant recipient may retain both the salary and RSP components of the Investigator Grant.

CIs may not suspend an Investigator Grant for the purposes of taking up another non-Australian Government grant.

#### 4.7 Current and/or former Investigator Grant recipients

If an Investigator Grant CIA holds, or has previously held an Investigator Grant(s), they will be eligible to apply to a restricted number of Categories and Levels of Investigator Grant.

Eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant at a given Category and Level will be determined by the number of times the highest Level has been held, as detailed in **Table 2**.

Current or previous Investigator Grant recipients cannot apply for an Investigator Grant at a Level lower than the applicant's most recently held Investigator Grant.

An Investigator Grant CI is eligible to apply for a new Investigator Grant, if at the time of application, their existing Investigator Grant will end before, or be in its final year on, 1 January of the year the new Investigator Grant is to commence.

If the grant application is successful, the CI will complete the final year of their existing Investigator Grant before commencing their new Investigator Grant. If an applicant is unsuccessful, they may re-apply in their final year to the next Investigator Grant opportunity.

A summary of the Categories and Levels of Investigator Grants for which current or previous Investigator Grant recipients may apply is at Appendix F.

#### 4.8 Emerging Leadership applicants – PhD census date

As at 1 March in the year of application, an Emerging Leadership applicant must have held their PhD, or equivalent (see section 4.2), for no more than 10 years from the date that their PhD thesis was passed (not the date of conferral), unless they have had a career disruption (see Appendix B).

Each period of career disruption (see Appendix B) being claimed in the application must:

- not be counted twice if there is overlap with another career disruption
- must only include periods before the close date (any career disruptions beyond the application close date will not be applicable/considered in this funding round), and
- involve a continuous absence from work of 90 calendar days or more, and/or be continuously employed part-time (with defined % full-time equivalent, FTE) due to

circumstances defined as a career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more<sup>10</sup>.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence that applicants to the EL Category have met the 10 year time restriction (pass date of PhD or other equivalent qualification/research experience), including any career disruption claims, if applicable. This evidence must be an official document from the relevant institution(s) and must be available to NHMRC if requested.

Note: Neither the submission date of the PhD thesis nor the date of degree conferral will be accepted.

#### 4.9 Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in the Grant Guidelines
- it, or any CI named on the application, contravenes an applicable law or code
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), and
- any CI named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or Delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect consequential action taken by NHMRC in response to a finding of research misconduct or a breach of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (the Code), or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the *NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding* available from [NHMRC's website](#).

Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA and Administering Institution certification.

If a decision to exclude an application from further consideration is made, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO) in writing. The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision in writing. Decisions to exclude an application may be reviewable by NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints.

## 5 What the grant money can be used for

Funding provided by NHMRC for a Research Activity must be spent on a cost directly incurred in relation to that Research Activity.

The salary component of an Investigator Grant includes salary and all salary on-costs (including payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, leave entitlements) for the grant recipient.

The RSP component of an Investigator Grant can only be spent on direct costs of research as described in the *NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines* (see [Appendix G](#)). The RSP must not be used to supplement the salary of the Investigator Grant recipient, but may be used for salary

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<sup>10</sup> For example, an applicant who has childcare responsibilities at 0.2 FTE (i.e. employed at 0.8 FTE) would need to maintain this level of employment for at least 450 consecutive calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 90 continuous calendar days

costs to employ research staff. NHMRC guidance on salary contributions for research staff, based on roles and responsibilities of the position, is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

## 5.1 Duplicate funding

NHMRC may compare the research proposed in grant applications with grants previously funded, currently funded, and funded by other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council or Department of Health) and published research. NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research aims of the research activities. If NHMRC subsequently does not consider the research activities to be sufficiently different, the applicant will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

NHMRC may disclose applicants' personal information to overseas entities, Australian, State/Territory or local government agencies, organisations or individuals where necessary to assess an application or to administer a grant. See NHMRC's Privacy Policy and the *Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information* section of these guidelines for further information.

## 6 The assessment criteria

Applications for Investigator Grants 2019 are assessed by peers on the extent to which the application meets the scheme objectives. Applications will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria listed below.

- Track record, relative to opportunity (70%), and
- Knowledge Gain (30%).

Track Record - NHMRC defines 'Track Record' for the Investigator Grant scheme as the value of an individual's past research achievements, relative to opportunity, not prospective achievements, using evidence. Assessment of Track Record comprises peer reviewers' consideration of:

- Publications (35%)
- Research Impact (20%), and
- Leadership (15%).

Knowledge Gain - NHMRC defines 'Knowledge Gain' for the Investigator Grant scheme as the quality of the proposed research and significance of the knowledge gained. It incorporates theoretical concepts, hypothesis, research design, robustness and the extent to which the research findings will contribute to the research area and health outcomes (by advancing knowledge, practice or policy).

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions, where applicable (see [Appendix B](#)).

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will be considered when assessing research output and track record.

## 6.1 Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity-building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Qualifying applications must address NHMRC's *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as follows:

- Community engagement - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.
- Benefit - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
- Sustainability and transferability - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.
- Building capability - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

These applications will be assigned to peer reviewers with specific expertise in Indigenous health research. The peer reviewer(s) will consider how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

## 7 How to apply

### 7.1 Overview of application process and timing

<b>5 December 2018</b>	Applications open in NHMRC's granting system
<b>17.00 AEDT</b>	
<b>16 January 2019</b>	Minimum data due in NHMRC's granting system
<b>17.00 AEDT</b>	
<b>6 February 2019</b>	Applications close in NHMRC's granting system
<b>May 2019</b>	Anticipated peer review period

Applications must be submitted electronically using NHMRC's granting system unless otherwise advised by NHMRC.

Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and all CIs on an application to register for an account in NHMRC's granting system. Applicants who are not registered can submit a new user request via the login page of NHMRC's granting system.

Applicants should refer to NHMRC's granting system Training Program on [NHMRC's website](#) for detailed user instructions, or contact their RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further assistance.

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

## 7.2 Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in NHMRC's granting system by the specified due date to allow NHMRC to start identifying suitable peer reviewers. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Using placeholder text such as "text", "synopsis" or "xx" etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Minimum data fields for Investigator Grants are outlined within NHMRC's granting system.

**Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.**

RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission.

## 7.3 Application requirements

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be assessed as ineligible.

## 7.4 Consumer and community participation

The *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.

Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research. Further information on the Consumer Health Forum and the Statement on Participation is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

## 7.5 Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC-approved Administering Institution using NHMRC's granting system.

Certification is required firstly by the CIA and then by the Administering Institution RAO by the specified due date or the application will be ruled ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

**Once submitted to NHMRC, the application is considered final and no changes can be made.**

### 7.5.1 CIA certification

The CIA must provide the RAO with evidence that the application is complete, i.e. through written evidence such as email. Such written evidence should be retained by the Administering Institution and must be provided to NHMRC if requested.

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA prior to submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct, and all eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the Research Activity have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- CIA has provided written agreement to be named on the application, to participate in the manner described in the application and to the use of their personal information as described in the *NHMRC Privacy Policy*.
- CIA has provided written agreement for the final application to be certified.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time of award. Conditions may change during the course of the grant, for example, reporting obligations may change. CIA will need to meet new/changed conditions.
- The reported outcomes of the research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.
- Grant offers may be withdrawn and action taken over the life of the grant, if eligibility criteria to accept and/or continue holding a grant are not met.

### 7.5.2 Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution prior to submitting an application:

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- Where the CIA is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant.
- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the Funding Period, or 50% of the Funding Period if CIA is an NHMRC Emerging Leader Fellow.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support (if applicable) will be available for the Funding Period.

- Approval of the Research Activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.
- Written evidence of consent has been obtained from all CIs and AIs and provided to the RAO.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO role is authorised to certify and submit applications.

## 7.6 Retracted publications

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, the applicant must promptly notify their RAO. The RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity of the retraction by email ([help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)) with an explanation of the reasons for the retraction.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's track record, the applicant must immediately record that information in their Profile & CV in NHMRC's granting system.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, the applicant should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, an applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the RAO must advise NHMRC in writing (to [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au)), clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

## 7.7 Withdrawal of applications

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC.

An application may be 'marked for deletion' by the applicant in NHMRC's granting system before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the round has closed. The application will not be deleted while the funding round remains open for application submission.

## 7.8 Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's RAO. RAOs can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice.

NHMRC's Research Help Centre

P: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

E: [help@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:help@nhmrc.gov.au).

Refer to the [Research Help Centre webpage](#) for opening hours.

## 8 Assessment of grant applications

### 8.1 Who will assess applications?

NHMRC's peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application according to the Code to ensure that only the highest quality, value with money research is recommended for funding.

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the *NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review*, available from [NHMRC's website](#).

Applicants must not make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its peer review. Doing so may constitute a breach of the Code and result in the application being excluded from consideration.

#### 8.1.1 Investigator Grants assessment process

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see section 6). Some applications may be discussed by peer reviewers. The overall scores from assessments will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is at the [NHMRC website](#).

### 8.2 Who will approve grants?

In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC's CEO makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC.

## 9 Notification of application outcomes

NHMRC may advise applicants of their outcome under embargo. An embargo is the prohibition of publicising information or news provided by NHMRC until a certain date or until certain conditions have been met. [NHMRC's website](#) provides further information on what can and cannot happen where information on a grant is released under embargo.

## 10 Successful grant applications

CIAs whose applications are approved will have access to a letter of offer through NHMRC's granting system. Administering Institutions responsible for administering approved applications will also have access to the letter of offer. In addition, the Administering Institution will have access, through NHMRC's granting system, to the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online signing/acceptance process within NHMRC's granting system.

NHMRC's CEO or delegate may withdraw or vary an offer of a grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue.

### 10.1 Information required from awardees

Awardees may be required to supply additional information about their Research Activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the letter of offer.



## 10.2 Approvals and licences

Where relevant, particularly for ethics and biosafety, NHMRC funded Research Activities must have received approval from the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies before funding can commence.

For further information see [NHMRC's website](#).

## 10.3 NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these Grant Guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. In accepting the Schedules, the Administering Institution is agreeing to the conditions contained in the Funding Agreement and the Schedule.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found on [NHMRC's website](#) under Funding Agreement and Deeds of Agreement. A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution is in place, and
- the appropriate Schedule to the Funding Agreement is accepted by the Responsible Officer or their delegate and is accepted and executed by NHMRC.

### 10.3.1 Responsible conduct of research

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Administering Institutions and CIAs are bound by the conditions of the Funding Agreement. NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the Code.

## 10.4 Payments

Payments will commence once all outstanding obligations (e.g. conditions, eligibility rules or data requirements specified in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant guidelines or letter of offer) have been met by the CIA and the Administering Institution.

## 10.5 Suspension of awards

NHMRC funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, requests made by the CIA. Variations will generally only be granted if allowed in the grant guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC when it is reasonable to consider there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of alleged research misconduct, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

## 10.6 Tax implications

All amounts referred to in these Grant Guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation matters associated with the grant.

## 10.7 Processes specific to Investigator Grants

Additional administrative obligations and processes specific to Investigator Grant awardees are outlined in the following sections. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in these guidelines, the NHMRC Funding Agreement and on the [NHMRC website](#).

Where an Investigator Grant recipient is unable to meet the general and/or Investigator Grant specific requirements, the Administering Institution must submit a variation to defer the commencement date (section 12.1).

If an applicant's employment circumstances change following submission of an application for an Investigator Grant or during the course of an Investigator Grant, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, period spent overseas and receipt of a non-Commonwealth Fellowship that impacts Investigator Grant salary, NHMRC must be notified.

Requests to vary the terms of a Grant should be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in NHMRC's granting system.

#### 10.7.1 Acceptance and commencement of an Investigator Grant

Investigator Grants are expected to commence on 1 January of the year immediately after the grant application was submitted. Where an Investigator Grant recipient is unable to meet this requirement, the Administering Institution must submit a variation to defer the commencement date (see section 12.1). Grant recipients should note that deferrals of less than 12 months will cause asynchrony with the scheme and potentially affect eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.

#### 10.7.2 Suspension of Investigator Grants

NHMRC will consider requests to suspend Investigator Grants, on a case-by-case basis, under the following circumstances:

- career disruption (see [Appendix B](#)), and
- time overseas as an EL.

Grant recipients should note that suspensions that are not 12 month multiples will cause asynchrony with subsequent Investigator Grant funding opportunities and may affect eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.

A suspended Investigator Grant will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the period of the suspension. Requests to suspend a grant must be supported by the Administering Institution.

##### 10.7.2.1 Suspension of Investigator Grants for career disruptions

Investigator Grant recipients may:

- request to suspend their grant (salary and RSP) for a period(s) of defined career disruption (see section 10.7.2), or
- cease the salary component of the grant while their Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP during the period of the career disruption so the program of research can continue in the Investigator's absence.

If the Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP during the researcher's career disruption period, then:

- the grant's duration still remains at five years, i.e. the grant duration will not be extended, and
- the salary component of the grant will be reduced by a time and an amount commensurate with the period of the career disruption.

#### 10.7.2.2 Suspension of Investigator Grants for time overseas as an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant recipient

EL grant recipients who are overseas for the purposes of their EL grant (see section 3.3.5) may apply to suspend their grant (salary and RSP) for up to two years, to complete their overseas research, but not for non-research vocational reasons or pursuits unrelated to the Investigator Grant. Such grant recipients must have the support of both their overseas and Australian Administering Institution.

#### 10.7.3 Parental leave

Parental leave provided for under State and Territory legislation is the responsibility of the Administering Institution.

NHMRC does not make available additional funds to those provided in the original Investigator Grant to cover conditions of employment including parental leave.

#### 10.7.4 Adjustments to time commitment

Requests to adjust a grant recipient's time commitment will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Administering Institution. If the request is approved, then the Investigator Grant duration will remain at five years.

##### 10.7.4.1 Requests to reduce time commitment

Full-time Investigator Grant recipients may apply to undertake a period of their grant on a part-time basis for a period(s) of defined career disruption ([Appendix B](#)) or to enable recipients to conduct research while maintaining other professional activity (see section 3.3.2).

If a request to reduce to a part-time commitment is approved by NHMRC, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced pro-rata. The researcher may retain 100% of their RSP or reduce it in proportion to the requested part-time rate.

##### 10.7.4.2 Requests to increase time commitment

Investigator Grants Part-time Personal are intended to be part-time at the requested FTE for the duration of the grant. Recipients may request to increase their time commitment and convert to full-time salary for personal reasons, such as changes in carer responsibility or recovery from an illness or major injury. Requests to convert to full-time will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Investigator Grant recipient's Administering Institution.

Where a request to convert or return to full-time is approved, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be increased to the full-time amount for the remaining duration of the grant however, the value of the RSP will be unchanged<sup>11</sup>.

#### 10.7.5 Changes in circumstance

Investigator Grant recipients are required to inform NHMRC of changes to their circumstances that may affect their eligibility to receive the salary component of an Investigator Grant. If this happens, the salary component of their grant will cease from the date the change occurred.

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<sup>11</sup>For example, if 80% RSP is requested at time of the Investigator Grant application, then the RSP amount will remain at 80%.

## 11 Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on the [GrantConnect website](#) 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

## 12 How NHMRC monitors grant activity

### 12.1 Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are limited circumstances where it is appropriate to vary an NHMRC grant (including the Research Activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant should be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in NHMRC's granting system. For information on grant variations see NHMRC's *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

### 12.2 Reporting

Administering Institutions are required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

#### 12.2.1 Financial reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant or upon transfer to a new Administering Institution, a financial acquittal is also required. Refer to [NHMRC's website](#) for details of format and timing.

#### 12.2.2 Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each Research Activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on [NHMRC's website](#). It is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met prior to acceptance of a new grant.

Information included in the Final Report may be publicly released. Use of this information may include publication on [NHMRC's website](#), publicity (including release to the media) and the promotion of research achievements.

All information provided to NHMRC in reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funded research projects, funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

#### 12.2.3 NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

Grantees undertaking research related to dementia must contribute their expertise to the NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research, which is responsible for strategically expanding, coordinating and translating the national dementia research effort. The NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research is drawing on the expertise of researchers and other dementia stakeholders via a membership model to drive Australia's dementia research and translation effort, and work together to maximise the impact of research.

Additional reporting on NHMRC funded dementia research will also be sought from Administering Institutions as required to inform the Institute's work plan and subsequent research activities.

### 12.3 Evaluation of the Investigator Grant scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its funding schemes to determine their effectiveness and to identify where improvements can be made.

### 12.4 Open Access Policy

NHMRC supports the sharing of outputs from NHMRC funded research including publications and data. The aims of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* are to mandate the open access sharing of publications and encourage innovative open access to research data. This policy also requires that patents resulting from NHMRC funding be made findable through listing in SourceIP. NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

Combined, these approaches will help to increase reuse of data, improve research integrity and contribute to a stronger knowledge economy. Open access will also assist with reporting, demonstration of research achievement, improve track record assessment processes for the long term and contribute to better collaborations.

All recipients of NHMRC grants must comply with all elements of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy*.

## 13 Probity

### 13.1 Complaints process

Applicants or grantees seeking to lodge a formal complaint about an NHMRC process related to funding should do so via the Administering Institution's RAO, in writing, within 28 days of the relevant NHMRC decision or action.

Each complaint should be directed to the Complaints Team at: [complaints@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:complaints@nhmrc.gov.au).

NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints.

Refer to NHMRC's Complaints Policy and the Commissioner of Complaints webpage for further information.

Applicants or grantees may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

### 13.2 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes identifying:

- what personal information NHMRC collects
- why NHMRC collects applicants' personal information, and
- who NHMRC gives applicants' personal information to.

Applicants are required as part of their application to declare their ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles, and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors engaged by the applicant to assist with the activity.

Personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if applicants are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; if the disclosure is related to the purpose for which it was collected; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if the applicant has consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this funding scheme in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

NHMRC may reveal confidential information to:

- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the scheme effectively
- employees and contractors of NHMRC to research, assess, monitor and analyse schemes and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in reports and consultations
- NHMRC approved Administering Institutions' Research Administration Offices
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

Applicants or grantees must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

NHMRC may share information provided to it by applicants with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- *Crimes Act 1914, and*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995.*

### 13.3 Freedom of Information

NHMRC is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government's transparency and accountability requirements.

## 14 NHMRC policies

Administering Institutions and CIAs are bound by the conditions of the Funding Agreement. It is the responsibility of Administering Institutions and CIAs to be aware of, and be compliant with, all relevant legislation and policies relating to the conduct of the Research Activity.

NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the Code.

For further information on the expectations of Administering Institutions and CIAs, see [NHMRC's website](#).

## 15 Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting activity, to determine applicant rankings.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the announcement of the grant, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)</i>	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
final year	Is the final 12 calendar months of a grant.
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the NHMRC Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.
funding round	Collectively refers to the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants opportunities commencing funding in the same year.
grant	<p>A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) under which relevant money, or other consolidated revenue funds, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth</li> <li>b) which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals</li> <li>c) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives.</li> </ul> <p>under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.</p>
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the schedule to the NHMRC Funding Agreement.



Term	Definition
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov.au">www.grants.gov.au</a>.</p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities must publish on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
grant program	Is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program. This is referred to as a scheme in this document.
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant.
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	The purpose of the MREA is to provide assistance to Federal and State Government Departments, institutions, universities and/or persons engaged in medical research.
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	<p>The MRFF was established on 26 August 2015 by the <i>Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015</i> (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health website: <a href="https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund">https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund</a>.</p>
NHMRC's granting system	NHMRC's electronic grants management solution for grant application, assessment and administration.
peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with knowledge and expertise appropriate for the applications they are reviewing.
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs (schemes). A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program (scheme) associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Term	Definition
Probity Event	<p>Probity Event means any event or occurrence which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has a material adverse effect on the integrity, character or honesty of the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity; or</li> <li>b) relates to the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity and has a material adverse effect on the public interest or public confidence in the Administering Institution, Participating Institution or Research Activity.</li> </ul>
schedule	<p>Means the contract template used by NHMRC to form part of the Funding Agreement. The schedule sets out the research activity and is signed by NHMRC and the CIA's Administering Institution.</p>
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a term used in the CGRGs and is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved</li> <li>• the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>

# Appendix A. NHMRC strategic priorities, Investigator Grants 2019 priorities and funding organisations

## A1 NHMRC strategic priorities

Each year, NHMRC identifies strategic priorities for funding. NHMRC's current research strategic priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers
- health services research, and
- gender equality.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health research and researchers**

NHMRC is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourages applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Support for health and medical research and research translation is central to achieving improvements in this area. It is also important to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how this diversity relates to health issues in these communities.

As part of NHMRC's stated commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has established certain requirements and processes designed to ensure that research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is of the highest scientific merit and is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Applicants proposing to undertake research that specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data should be aware of, and must refer to, the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- *NHMRC Road Map 3: A Strategic Framework for Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health through Research*
- *Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research*, and
- *Keeping research on track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics*

### **Health Services Research**

Increasing the number of health services research grants is a strategic priority. Of the total 1035 competitive grants awarded in 2017, only 6.9% of these grants were for Health Services Research, which is significantly lower than Basic Science at 47.3%, Clinical Medicine and Science at 31.2% and Public Health at 14.6%.

### **Gender Equality**

Funding outcomes have highlighted the underrepresentation of female chief investigators across many of NHMRC's funding schemes. This supports the need for a robust and sustainable approach to improving success rates for female researchers and to encourage more female researchers to apply to NHMRC funding schemes.

## **A2 Investigator Grants 2019 strategic priority areas**

In addition to these strategic priorities, NHMRC may award Investigator Grants that:

- address other defined strategic priorities
- acknowledge prominent Australians' contributions to health and medical research (Special Awards), and
- are funded with partner organisations.

### **Special Awards**

#### **Elizabeth Blackburn Investigator Grants**

Elizabeth Blackburn Investigator Grants recognise one of Australia's Nobel Laureates, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn. The Elizabeth Blackburn Investigator Grants (formerly Research Fellowships) were established to promote and foster the career development of female researchers and are awarded annually to the highest ranked female applicant who accepts the grant in each of the biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research pillars of the Leadership (L) Category of Investigator Grants.

This grant does not provide funds in addition to those already provided in the Investigator Grant package.

#### **Minister's Medal**

The Commonwealth Health Minister's Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research is a \$50,000 grant awarded to the top-ranked Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2) Investigator Grant applicant in recognition of their outstanding achievement in the field of health and medical research. The award supplements the Investigator Grant research support package to provide additional support for the recipient's research. The funds must be spent in accordance with section 4 and reported on as per normal.

#### **Frank Fenner Investigator Grant**

This award is named to honour the achievements of Professor Frank Fenner (1914-2010). The Frank Fenner Investigator Grant is awarded to the highest ranked Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1) Investigator Grant applicant from the basic science or public health pillars. The grant recipient's research focus will be in an area of international public health application and will best reflect the qualities exemplified in Professor Fenner's career.

This grant does not provide funds in addition to those already provided in the Investigator Grant package.

#### **Bernie Banton Investigator Grant**

The Bernie Banton Investigator Grant (formerly Fellowship) was established to commemorate the life of Bernie Banton by supporting health and medical research that has the greatest potential to make an impact on the treatment of mesothelioma. To be eligible for this grant, an applicant must be working in the field of mesothelioma and asbestosis. The grant will be awarded to the highest funded Emerging Leadership (EL) Investigator Grant applicant undertaking research in this field.

This grant does not provide funds in addition to those already provided in the Investigator Grant package.

### **Electromagnetic Energy Investigator Grant**

The Australian Government recognises public concern about the health effects of radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME), and the need to ensure that standards and public health policies continue to be based on the best available scientific information. NHMRC administers the

RF EME research program to provide funding for health and medical research on the health effects of RF EME. The program is funded by a levy paid annually by radiocommunication license holders and collected by the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

To be considered for this funding, applicants must:

- show that their proposed research investigates the effects of RF EME on human health
- provide a description of both the RF exposure (such as frequency range and source of the exposure) and the health effect that is being investigated, and
- provide a detailed justification on how their application aligns with the research agenda into RF EME and health outlined in the 2017 Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) Technical Report, *Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy and Health: Research Needs*.

NHMRC in conjunction with ARPANSA will determine if an application meets the criteria for RF EME research and is eligible to be funded through the RF EME program. Applications not in scope will be considered for standard NHMRC funding.

### **Investigator Grants funded by other organisations**

Investigator Grants may be funded by or in conjunction with other organisations. These grants offer opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the priorities and research interests of the partner organisations.

Some funding partners may require a separate application to be provided to them, or may have specific criteria and requirements, in addition to NHMRC. Applicants may contact the funding partner to identify any additional requirements.

For the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988*, applicants and other persons whose details appear in grant applications (e.g. other investigators) should be aware that NHMRC may provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes to the funding organisation(s) nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information is to enable potential funding partners to assess the application's eligibility for funding under the funding organisation's policies.

In the event that a funding partner is unable to fulfil their obligation to a co-funded grant, NHMRC will continue to support the Investigator Grant recipient at the Category and Level of the grant that would have been awarded by NHMRC.

Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the funding partner, including Investigator Grants that may have been fully funded by the funding partner, will not be supported by NHMRC.

Further information on Investigator Grants funded by other organisations is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

The following organisations are expected to partner NHMRC in funding grants under this grant opportunity:

- Department of Health (MRFF).

### **MRFF funded Investigator Grants**

Eligibility assessment for MRFF funded Investigator Grants is undertaken by NHMRC. As the same selection criteria will apply to both NHMRC funded, and MRFF funded grants, a single assessment process will be used to produce a single ranked list. MRFF funded Investigator Grants will be awarded in merit order to applicants whose research aligns with MRFF priorities.

In addition to the specific programs detailed below, there may be further MRFF programs currently under development that will use Investigator Grants for part or all of the funding available. Details of these programs will be made available on the [Department of Health website](#) as soon as they become available.

#### Next Generation Clinical Researchers program

This grant opportunity will also be used to determine recipients for the MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program Fellowships. The MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program will fund up to \$20 million MRFF Investigator Grant Fellowships in 2019/20. The aim of the MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program is to increase the talent among the health and medical research workforce through Fellowships that will:

1. enable primarily early to mid-career investigators to establish themselves as independent, self-directed researchers with a focus on capacity building in the clinical, population health, biomedical and bioinformatics fields.
2. provide support for health professionals to translate evidence into healthcare and public health improvements.
3. bridge the gap between the acquisition of new knowledge from research and its implementation into practice among clinical, public health and health service professionals.

Consistent with these aims, the MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program will draw the majority of its fellows from the EL category and with some potential to draw from the L category, provided the grant recipient's research proposal aligns with the aims of the program.

Further information about the Next Generation Clinical Researchers program is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

#### MRFF Million Minds Mission

This grant opportunity may be used to determine recipients under the MRFF Million Minds Mission. The program will support research to improve the diagnosis and treatment of people with mental health issues. Further information on the program, including funding, is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

## Appendix B. Relative to Opportunity policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity Policy with respect to:

- NHMRC peer review, and
- eligibility to apply for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants.

The audience is applicants and peer reviewers.

NHMRC's objective is to support the best Australian health and medical research and the best researchers, at all career stages. NHMRC seeks to ensure that researchers with a variety of career experiences and those who have experienced pregnancy or a major illness/injury or have caring responsibilities, are not disadvantaged in applying for NHMRC grants.

### Policy approach

NHMRC considers Relative to Opportunity to mean that assessment processes should accurately assess an applicant's track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including considering whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant. It also means that applicants with career disruptions should not be disadvantaged (in terms of years since they received their PhD) when determining their eligibility for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants and that their Career Disruptions should be considered when their applications are being peer reviewed.

In alignment with *NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review*, particularly the principles of fairness and transparency, the following additional principles further support this objective:

- **Research opportunity:** Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct.
- **Fair access:** Researchers should have access to funding support available through NHMRC grant programs consistent with their experience and career stage.
- **Career diversity:** Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside of academia should not be disadvantaged. NHMRC recognises that time spent in sectors such as industry, may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

The above principles frame NHMRC's approach to the assessment of a researcher's track record during expert review of grant applications and eligibility of applicants applying for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants. NHMRC expects that those who provide expert assessment during peer review will give clear and explicit attention to these principles to identify the highest quality research and researchers to be funded. NHMRC recognises that life circumstances can be very varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity and Career Disruption considerations during peer review.

### Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review of applications for funding

During peer review of applications, circumstances considered under the Relative to Opportunity Policy are:

- amount of time spent as an active researcher

- available resources, including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities
- building relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods that can impact on track record and productivity
- clinical, administrative or teaching workload
- relocation of an applicant and his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact on research productivity
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including 'sorry business'
- the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question
- research outputs and productivity noting time employed in other sectors. For example there might be a reduction in publications when employed in sectors such as industry
- carer responsibilities (that do not come under the Career Disruption policy below).

### Career Disruption considerations during peer review and eligibility to apply for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants

A Career Disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

The period of career disruption may be used:

- to determine an applicant's eligibility for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant
- to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application
- for consideration by peer reviewers.

To be considered for the purposes of eligibility and peer review, a period of Career Disruption is defined as:

- a continuous absence from work for 90 calendar days or more, and/or
- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined %FTE) due to circumstances classified as Career Disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more<sup>1</sup>.

### Career Disruption and eligibility to apply for Investigator Grants

A Career Disruption can affect an applicant's eligibility to apply for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant. For such grants, the 10-year time limit on the number of years post-PhD may be extended commensurate with the period of the Career Disruption.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 450 calendar days to achieve a Career Disruption of 90 calendar days.



## Implementation

Information on how applicants can demonstrate their track record, Relative to Opportunity, for the purposes of peer review is available in NHMRC's granting system and in NHMRC's *Guide to Peer Review*.

Information on how applicants can demonstrate that a Career Disruption(s) affects their eligibility to apply for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant is also available in NHMRC's granting system and in the Investigator Grant Guidelines.

## Appendix C. Statement of Expectations

The *Statement of Expectations* outlines the baseline expectations of applicants within each level of Investigator Grant. Applicants who have never received an NHMRC Fellowship or Investigator Grant should refer to these expectations and apply at a level commensurate with their experience and profile.

The descriptors provide a broad benchmark and it is not essential that all elements be met.

### Leadership Level 3 (L3)

L3 Investigator Grant recipients will be leading international authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- significant original contributions of major importance that have had a positive impact on health and medical research, the health system and/or the health of the population
- experience in leading a major independent research program(s) involving national and international collaborative networks
- national and international contributions through leadership in their scientific discipline (e.g. in research policy and on advisory committees)
- extensive supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers, and
- significant leadership roles within their department, centre, institution or organisation, that extend beyond their research.

### Leadership Level 2 (L2)

L2 Investigator Grant recipients will be leading national and rising international authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- substantial and original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research, the health system and/or the health of the population
- experience in leading an independent research program(s) involving national collaborative networks
- national and possibly international contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. research advisory boards, peer review)
- supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers, and
- leadership roles within their department, centre, institution or organisation that extend beyond their research.

### Leadership Level 1 (L1)

L1 Investigator Grant recipients will be national authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research, the health system and/or the health of the population
- ability to independently conceive and direct research programs, coordinate a team of researchers and generate national collaborations
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, peer review, research advisory boards or professional societies)
- supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers, and

- contribution(s) within their department, centre, institute or organisation that extend beyond their research e.g. membership of regulatory or management committees.

### **Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)**

EL2 Investigator Grant recipients will be ≤10 years post-PhD (or equivalent, see section 3.8) and recognised for their expertise in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions of influence in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception and direction of research projects, while developing independence
- experience in supervising a small research team
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, community leadership, peer review and professional societies), and
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

### **Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)**

EL1 Investigator Grant recipients will be ≤10 years post-PhD (or equivalent, see section 3.8) and will be beginning to gain recognition in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contribution(s) in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception of research projects
- scientific contributions within their region, state or territory (e.g. community leadership, state level contribution to a professional society)
- limited but developing supervision of research staff and students, and
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

Guidance on relationships between NHMRC Fellowship schemes and the Investigator Grant Levels is outlined in Table 1 below. Eligibility for Investigator Grants based on previous or currently held Fellowships is at [Appendix E](#).

**Table 1.** Guidance on relationships between NHMRC Fellowship schemes and Investigator Grant Levels

<b>Current NHMRC Fellowship</b>	<b>Corresponding Investigator Grant Level</b>
Senior Principal Research Fellowship Australia Fellowship	Leadership Level 3
Principal Research Fellowship Practitioner Fellowship Level 2	Leadership Level 2
Practitioner Fellowship Level 1 Senior Research Fellowship Levels A and B Career Development Fellowship Level 2	Leadership Level 1
Career Development Fellowships Levels 1 and 2 Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship	Emerging Leadership Level 2
Early Career Fellowship Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship	Emerging Leadership Level 1

## Appendix D. Eligibility for Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes (2019 funding round)

Grant/s held on 1 January 2020	Grants eligible to apply for in the 2019 funding round (for funding in 2020)
No Fellowship, Program or Project Grants held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
One Project Grant held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
Two or more Project Grants held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
One Program Grant held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)</li> </ul>
One Program Grant and one Project Grant held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)</li> </ul>

<b>Grant/s held on 1 January 2020</b>	<b>Grants eligible to apply for in the 2019 funding round (for funding in 2020)</b>
NHMRC Fellowship ( <u>not</u> in the final year) held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship (in the final year) on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant*, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship ( <u>not</u> in the final year) and 1x Project Grant held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship (in the final year) and 1x Project Grant held on 1 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 2x Ideas Grants, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship ( <u>not</u> in the final year) and 2 or more Project Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>

<b>Grant/s held on 1 January 2020</b>	<b>Grants eligible to apply for in the 2019 funding round (for funding in 2020)</b>
NHMRC Fellowship (in the final year) and 2 or more Project Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered), <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, <b>OR</b></li> <li>• 1x Synergy Grant</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship ( <u>not</u> in the final year) and 1x Program Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship (in the final year) and 1x Program Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (100% reduction to RSP)</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship ( <u>not</u> in the final year), 1x Project Grant and 1x Program Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</li> </ul>
NHMRC Fellowship (in the final year), 1x Project Grant and 1x Program Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1x Investigator Grant* (100% reduction to RSP)</li> </ul>

\* If the first year of the Investigator Grant overlaps with the final year of a NHMRC fellowship, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid during the overlap (i.e. the period that both grants are held). During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the NHMRC fellowship and the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly.

## Appendix E. Eligibility of current or previous NHMRC Fellows for Investigator Grants

### Investigator Grant Salary Level

Highest NHMRC Fellowship level previously or currently held <sup>d</sup>	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 1</i> (EL1)	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 2</i> (EL2)	<i>Leadership Level 1</i> (L1)	<i>Leadership Level 2</i> (L2)	<i>Leadership Level 3</i> (L3)
<i>No previous NHMRC Fellowship</i>	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>a</sup>	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>a</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Early Career Fellowship<sup>b</sup></i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>a</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>a</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Career Development Fellowship Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>a</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Career Development Fellowship Level 2<sup>c</sup></i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Practitioner Fellowship Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Research Fellowship Level A</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Research Fellowship Level B</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Practitioner Fellowship Level 2</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Principal Research Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Principal Research Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible
<i>Australia Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible

<sup>a</sup> Or equivalent.

<sup>b</sup> Including NHMRC-ARC Dementia Research Development Fellowships



<sup>c</sup> Including Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship Scheme

<sup>d</sup> Including MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program Fellowships funded via the NHMRC Practitioner, Career Development and Translating Research Into Practice Fellowship schemes.

### **Case studies**

The following case studies provide illustrative examples of eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant.

Dr A completed a PhD thirteen years ago and has never held a NHMRC fellowship. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Dr B completed a PhD seven years ago and currently holds a NHMRC Early Career Fellowship. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Emerging Leadership Level 2 or at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Dr C has held a NHMRC Senior Research Fellowship Level A before taking a two-year career break. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

## Appendix F. Future eligibility of Investigator Grant recipients

Highest level of Investigator Grant held previously	Investigator Grant Salary Level				
	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)</i>	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)</i>	<i>Leadership Level 1 (L1)</i>	<i>Leadership Level 2 (L2)</i>	<i>Leadership Level 3 (L3)</i>
No Investigator Grants held previously	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>c</sup>	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>c</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Emerging Leadership Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD <sup>c</sup>	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Emerging Leadership Level 2</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Leadership Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible <sup>a</sup>	Eligible <sup>a</sup>	Eligible <sup>b</sup>
<i>Leadership Level 2</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible <sup>a</sup>	Eligible <sup>b</sup>
<i>Leadership Level 3</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Investigator Grants at Leadership Level 1 and Level 2 may be held a maximum of twice. A previous recipient is therefore eligible to apply for a second term.

<sup>b</sup> Investigator Grants at Leadership Level 3 may be held a maximum of five times (as long as the limit of five Investigator Grants at all Leadership levels is not exceeded). Hence, a previous recipient may be eligible to apply for up to four additional terms.

<sup>c</sup> Or equivalent.

### Case studies

The following case studies provide illustrative examples of eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant.

Dr G currently holds an Investigator Grant at Emerging Leadership Level 1. As long as s/he is still no more than 10 years post-PhD, s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Emerging Leadership Level 2. If s/he is more than 10 years post-PhD, s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Dr H has held two Investigator Grants at Leadership Level 2. S/he may only apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 3.

## Appendix G. NHMRC Direct Research Cost Guidelines

A definitive list of Direct Research Costs (DRCs) is in many instances not appropriate, therefore core principles have been developed to be used to determine whether particular expenses are DRCs for the NHMRC funded research activity in question (Research Activity). The principles recognise that the aims and objectives of the Research Activity are a key factor in the decision to classify an expenditure item as a DRC.

These Guidelines also set out a small number of expenses that are not DRCs and on which Funds must not be spent. When deciding if expenditure is a DRC or not, reference should be made to these Guidelines. If clarification is required please contact your Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO) in the first instance. If required, they may then contact [postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au).

The NHMRC Funding Agreement specifies that NHMRC grant Funds can only be spent on the DRCs as described in these Guidelines.

### DRC Principles

Funding provided by NHMRC for a Research Activity may be spent on a cost incurred in relation to that Research Activity that satisfies all of the following requirements:

- The cost must be integral to achieving the objectives and outcomes of the Research Activity as set out in the Application for Funding for that Research Activity, as approved by NHMRC.
- The cost must be directly related to the grant proposal as set out in the Application for Funding for that Research Activity, as approved by NHMRC.
- The cost must not be for a facility or an administrative cost that would be provided by an institution in the normal course of undertaking and supporting health and medical research.

DRCs include costs that the Research Activity's Funding Policy expressly states may be paid for with NHMRC funding. Conversely, a cost that the Research Activity's Funding Policy expressly states may not be paid for with NHMRC funding, will not be a DRC.

These Guidelines replace all previous guidance material on DRCs. These Guidelines do not apply to the Independent Research Institutes Infrastructure Support Scheme (IRIIS) Grants or Equipment Grants.

### Guidance for the use of DRCs

#### Salaries and Salary on costs

Salary costs are to be requested in the application budget under Salaries/Personnel Support Packages. In limited circumstances, such as engagement of staff on short-term contracts, salary costs can be requested under DRCs. Whilst Funds awarded for Research Support schemes<sup>12</sup> can be used to cover the gap in salaries (except for Investigator Grant holders), applicants cannot request additional Funds in their application to cover this cost.

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<sup>12</sup> Investigator Grants Research Support Package component cannot be used to supplement the salary of the Investigator Grant holder, but may be used for salary costs to employ research staff.

NHMRC contributes to the cost of employing research personnel. The NHMRC salary contribution is usually calculated using a Salary Support Package (SSP) which is not designed to cover the full cost of employing the grant's research personnel.

NHMRC Funds provided for a Research Activity can be used for annual leave and long service leave entitlements that accrue in respect of research personnel during their employment on that Research Activity. Severance and termination payments and extended leave payments (leave entitlements accrued on non NHMRC Research Activities) are not DRCs and must not be paid for with NHMRC funding.

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is specifically excluded as a DRC and NHMRC Funds are not to be used to pay for this expense.

It is recognised that because NHMRC does not fund the full cost of employing research personnel there is, in most cases, a gap between SSP rates and the institutions enterprise bargaining rate (or equivalent). Where this occurs, there is flexibility to use NHMRC Funds provided for Research Support schemes (except for Investigator Grant holders) to cover the gap between the SSP and the researcher's part or total salary including on-costs<sup>13</sup>. Such use of Funds is to be the outcome of agreement between Administering Institutions and Chief Investigator A (CIA).

### **Travel**

Travel costs are only DRCs for a Research Activity, such as field work, research collaborations or for use of facilities in other countries, if the travel costs are directly related to the approved research objectives of that Research Activity. Airline membership, health insurance and travel insurance are generally not considered to be DRCs.

All travel, accommodation, meals and incidentals must be in accordance with the relevant travel policies and procedures of the Administering Institution.

Overseas travel must be formally approved and documented by the relevant Faculty Research Committee (or equivalent) prior to the travel being undertaken.

### **Conferences**

Conference costs are not to be included in the application budget. When investigators apply for research funding, it is not possible to predict where and how knowledge translation and knowledge transfer of their work will occur (because the research is yet to be undertaken). Thus, the costs of conference attendance are not to be included as DRCs in grant application budgets.

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#### **<sup>13</sup> Funding Agreement Clause 7 Use and Accountability for Funds and Other Contributions**

The flexibility to choose the particular DRC on which the Funds may be spent does not apply to People Support schemes (see exceptions below). Funds awarded through People Support schemes are to be spent exclusively for the purposes provided for in the relevant schemes Funding Policy.

The only People Support schemes that allow Funds to be used flexibly are the NHMRC-ARC Dementia Research Development Fellowship scheme and the Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship scheme. These schemes have a funding condition which allows Funds to be used flexibly in accordance with the provisions of a Research Support scheme, e.g. to cover gap in salaries.

However, if the application is successful grant Funds can be used to support conference attendance for the purpose of presenting the research outcomes, provided that the expenditure is in accordance with the DRC Principles.

### **Clinical Trials**

Refreshments for clinical trial participants are a DRC, as the refreshment relates directly to the achievement of the research aims for a Research Activity.

### **Entertainment, Meals, Hospitality**

Restaurant meals, alcohol and other hospitality are generally not DRCs.

### **Computers**

Only specialised computing requirements that are essential to meeting the specific research needs of a Research Activity would be considered DRCs. DRCs do not include personal computers, related peripherals or software needed for communicating, writing and undertaking simple analyses.

The only exceptions to this are that Scholarship and Early Career Fellowship grant holders may purchase personal computers with NHMRC funding.

### **Supplies, Postage, Telephones**

For supplies, postage and telephone expenses to be considered DRCs, their usage for a Research Activity must be significantly greater than the routine level for such items provided by Administering Institutions and must be used specifically for the research purposes of the Research Activity rather than to support administrative or clerical efforts. Examples include a Research Activity that requires significant data collection through an extensive mail survey or a Research Activity that requires the provision of paper notebooks to a large number of workshop participants.

### **Publications and Open Access Costs**

Publication and open access costs are not to be included in the application budget. When investigators apply for research funding, it is not possible to predict where and how knowledge translation and knowledge transfer of their work will occur (because the research is yet to be undertaken). Thus, the costs of publications and open access are not to be included as DRCs in grant application budgets.

However, if the application is successful, grant Funds can be used to support reasonable costs associated with publications and open access which are the result of the Research Activity and which are in accordance with the DRC Principles.

### **Land, Buildings and Fixtures**

These items are not DRCs and must not be paid for with NHMRC Funds.

### **Inquiries and Clarifications**

All inquiries are to be directed to the Administering Institution RAO in the first instance, who may then contact NHMRC's Research Administration Section via [postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au) for further clarification.