Centres of Research Excellence 2020 Guidelines

Opening date:	23 October 2019
Closing date and time:	17.00 AEDT on 04 December 2019
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Enquiries:	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:
	Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)
	Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au
	NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 16.30 AEDT on 04 December 2019.
	Note: NHMRC's 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.
Date guidelines released:	9 October 2019
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

Contents

1   Centres of Research Excellence: 2020 processes

NHMRC's Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) scheme is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

The CRE scheme is a component of the Portfolio Budget Statements
Program 1.1: Health and Medical Research, which contributes to Outcome 1: Improved health and medical knowledge.

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The grant opportunity opens

NHMRC publishes the grant guidelines on GrantConnect

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Applicants complete and submit a grant application

Applicants must complete the application form and address all of the eligibility criteria to be considered for a grant.

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Applications verified and assessed

Applications are verified against eligibility criteria and applicants are notified if not eligible. Peer reviewers assess applications against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money.

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Grant decisions are made

NHMRC's CEO seeks approval of funding recommendations from the Minister for Health.

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NHMRC notifies applicants of the outcome

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Applicant's Administering Institution accepts the NHMRC Grant Schedule(s) setting out the research activity

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Delivery of grant

Grantees undertake the grant activity as set out in the schedule to the grant funding agreement. NHMRC manages the grant through the relevant Administering Institution.

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Evaluation of the CRE scheme

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

1.1   Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) 2020 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant scheme/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) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

The CRE 2020 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. 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: basic science, clinical medicine and science, public health and health services research.

2   About the grant program

The objective of the CRE scheme is to improve health outcomes and promote or improve translation of research outcomes into policy and/or practice. The CRE scheme will also support researchers in capacity building activities, including in specific areas of need identified by NHMRC.

The intended outcomes of the CRE scheme are to:

- support the conduct and development of innovative, high quality, collaborative research
- promote effective translation of research into health policy and/or practice
- foster and build capacity in the health and medical research workforce
- provide opportunities to expand and improve collaborations between research teams.

CREs will provide support for teams of researchers to pursue collaborative research and develop capacity in clinical research, health services research and public health research.

Applicants nominate the stream that best fits their research proposal, although the NHMRC appreciates that there is often overlap. The following definitions are provided to assist applicants to select the appropriate stream.

- Clinical research is an interdisciplinary field intended to produce knowledge valuable for understanding human disease, preventing and treating illness, and promoting health. Clinical research embraces a range of study areas and disciplines involving interactions with patients, diagnostic clinical materials or data, or populations (adapted from the Association of American Medical Colleges and American Medical Association definition).

- Health services research is an interdisciplinary field that studies how social factors, financing systems, organisational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, and its quality, cost and outcomes. It provides data, evidence, and tools to make health care affordable, safe, effective, equitable, accessible and patient-centred (adapted from An Organizational Guide to Building Health Services Research Capacity, October 2012, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).

- Public health research, considered within these guidelines to be synonymous with population health research, is an interdisciplinary field focused on improving or protecting population health outcomes. It includes the study of factors that influence the health status of groups or whole populations, as well as the testing and evaluation of policies and interventions designed to prevent ill-health, improve the health of populations and ameliorate health disparities (adapted from Kindig D, Stoddart G. Am J Public Health. 2003 March; 93(3): 380–383; NHMRC Report of the Review of Public Health Research Funding in Australia (Nutbeam report) 2008, and the NHMRC Act 1992).

A CRE may be a single physical entity or institute, or be a geographically disparate network linking across more than one institution. Centres are encouraged to collaborate with, and participate in, national and international research studies.

2.1 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes for the CRE 2020 grant opportunity:

- All successful CRE applications will be awarded a fixed total budget of $2.5 million. Applicants are no longer required to submit detailed application budgets.

- The CRE in Population Health Research stream has been renamed the CRE in Public Health Research to create consistency with NHMRC's Broad Research Areas terminology. Renaming this stream does not affect the scope of research funded under the stream.

- The applicant team interview has been removed from the peer review process.

- Additional funding may be available to support health and medical research on the health effects of radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) (see Appendix A).

2.2 NHMRC structural priorities, Centres of Research Excellence 2020 priorities and funding with other organisations

NHMRC's Corporate 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. Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to deliver against its strategic priorities.

Information on NHMRC's structural priorities, CRE priorities and CRE funding with other organisations is outlined in Appendix A.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the CRE 2020 grant opportunity is estimated to be up to $35 million. NHMRC's Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes.

Subject to the receipt of competitive applications, the number of CRE grants to receive funding will be:

- up to six CREs in Clinical Research
- up to four CREs in Health Services Research
- up to four CREs in Public Health Research.

A CRE 2020 grant opportunity provides a fixed budget of $2.5 million per grant, paid evenly over the grant period.

3.2 Grant period

A CRE 2020 grant opportunity is awarded for a fixed five-year term.

4 Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions is 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 and for the duration of peer review. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be 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.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities or other NHMRC funding schemes will not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity.

Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants.

Grant offers may be withdrawn if eligibility criteria to accept a grant are not met. Action may also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

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

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

4.1.1 Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators

The maximum number of CIs allowed on a CRE grant application is 10.

Chief Investigator 'A'

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 or have an appropriate work visa in place. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.

Chief Investigators

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research.

CIs are expected to remain active on the Research Activity as outlined in the application for the duration of the grant. CIs may undertake research on a part-time basis for all or part of the duration of the grant.

Associate Investigators

An Associate Investigator (AI) is defined as an investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on any outputs (e.g. publications).

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 applies.

4.2 Multiple applications/grants

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

Note: Applications for CRE grants are not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants and will not affect a CI's ability to apply to these schemes.

4.2.1 Limits on the number of CRE grants that may be held

The amount of time committed by the CIs on the proposed CRE grant and their other grants held (or to be held) will be considered in the review of the CRE application. The time allocated by the CIs must be sufficient to ensure the viability of the CRE, and will be considered in the peer review process under the feasibility of the proposed research (see section 6).

4.3 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, 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 of the application.

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

5.1 Eligible grant activities and expenditure

Funding provided by NHMRC for a Research Activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that Research Activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the NHMRC website.

A CRE grant application does not require the inclusion of a research budget.

5.1.1 Salary support

CRE grants are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs. However, if salaries are sought for CIs, the costs must be directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research.

CIs, including the CIA, may draw a salary if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period. CIs based overseas are not able to draw a salary, but salary support is available for research support staff based overseas (see section 5.2). Salary costs must be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) outlined on the NHMRC website.

Applicants can receive up to 100% salary across NHMRC grants/awards. Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to 100%, if allowed in the grant guidelines for the respective grant opportunity.

Associate Investigators cannot draw a salary from CRE grants.

5.2 Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

CRE grant funds are for research cost expenditure in Australia. Funding may be used to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas, including salary support for overseas based research support staff, if the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project, and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia.

See *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the NHMRC website for further guidance on the expenditure of funding for a Research Activity.

5.3 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 CRE grants are assessed by peers against the assessment criteria listed below using the category descriptors at Appendix B as a guide.

- Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes (20%)
- Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice (20%)
- Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles (20%)
- Facilitate collaboration (20%)
- Record of Research and Translation Achievement – relative to opportunity (20%)

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

It is recognised that Aboriginal and/or 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.

Criterion One

Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes (20%)

- clarity of research objectives and theoretical concepts
- strengths and weaknesses of the research design(s), or the appropriateness and robustness of the proposed methodology/ies or appropriateness of the broader strategy of the research program of the Centre
- feasibility of the proposed research
- aims and concepts of the research are innovative or pioneering on an international level
- likelihood that significant new findings will be produced and substantially advance knowledge in the field.

Criterion Two

Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice (20%)

- the quality of the plan for research translation
- plans for promoting the Centre's activities to the wider community, including where appropriate, for commercial gain
- the involvement of end-users and the wider community in the planning, implementation and uptake of the research program.

Criterion Three

Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles (20%)

- strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and encouragement of further career development
- clarity of measures for integrating new researchers into the teams including mentoring strategies.

Criterion Four

Facilitate collaboration (20%)

Teams are required to outline past and/or proposed collaborative arrangements within the applicant team, and address the means whereby the collaborators will ensure the cohesive running of the research during its funding period, including but not limited to:

- likely effectiveness of working collaborations and intellectual exchange
- the relationship with other groups in the particular field of research
- integration and cohesiveness of the team.

Criterion Five

Record of Research and Translation Achievement – relative to opportunity (20%)

Record of Achievement is considered in terms of whether the previous research experience of applicants demonstrates that the team is capable of achieving the proposed project and/or has the ability to deliver the proposed project in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience.

Record of Achievement may encompass the national and international standing of the applicants based upon their research achievements, relative to opportunity, including but not limited to:

- research outputs – most recent significant publications; publications that illustrate innovation and significance to past accomplishments; impact or outcome of previous research achievements, including effects on health care practices or policy; awards or honours in recognition of achievements
- contribution to discipline or area – invitations to speak at international meetings, editorial appointments, specialist and high level health policy committee appointments
- other research-related achievements, such as:
  - o influence on clinical/health policy or practice, or provision of influential advice to health authorities and government
  - o impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes e.g. via mainstream media, the community or industry involvement.

6.1   Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 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 Roadmap 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research*
- *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders*, and
- *Keeping Research on Track II* (a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*

Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders can be put into practice in research).

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,* which will be taken into consideration when scoring against the assessment criteria outlined in section 6 (as relevant).

Applications not in scope will be considered for standard NHMRC funding.

7 How to apply

7.1 Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

23 October 2019	Applications open in NHMRC's granting system
17.00 AEDT 20 November 2019	Minimum data due in NHMRC's granting system
17.00 AEDT 04 December 2019	Applications close in NHMRC's granting system
Feb – Apr 2020	Anticipated peer review period
July/August 2020*	Anticipated notification of outcomes

*Date is indicative and subject to change.

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   Application Extensions

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case by case basis and must be submitted by email to help@nhmrc.gov.au on or before the scheme close date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or hurricanes, or
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family, is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions, if granted, will be for a maximum of seven calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent peer review processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed, especially as eligibility decisions for some NHMRC schemes depend on an applicant's success with other schemes.

Requests for extension submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

7.3   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 the CRE 2020 grant opportunity are outlined in Appendix D.

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.

7.4   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. Further information on what can and cannot be included in the application is provided in the Guide to Applicants at Appendix D.

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.

Additional requirements and guidance in relation to each component of the application are outlined at Appendix D.

7.5 Attachments to the application

NHMRC requires the following documents with your application:

- a grant proposal

You must attach supporting documentation to the application in line with the instructions provided in NHMRC's granting system or Appendix D. You should only attach requested documents. NHMRC will not consider information in attachments that it does not request.

7.6 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 is available on NHMRC's website.

7.7 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 ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

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

7.7.1 CIA certification

The CIA must provide the RAO with evidence that the application is complete and that all CIs have agreed to it, 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.

- All CIs and AIs have 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*.

- All CIs have 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. CIs 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.

7.7.2   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 and will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the Funding Period.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support 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.

7.8   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) 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), clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

7.9 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.

7.10 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.

Refer to the Research Help Centre webpage for opening hours.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

NHMRC considers applications through a targeted competitive grant process. Applications are required to meet eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria (see section 6) by independent peer reviewers.

8.1.1 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 to ensure that only the highest quality, value with money research is recommended for funding.

Applicants must not seek to identify or make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment, in keeping with NHMRC's principles of impartial and independent peer review. Seeking to influence the process or outcomes of peer review constitutes a breach of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

8.1.2 CRE assessment process

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an initial assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see section 6).

The outcome of this review will be used to create a shortlist of applications that are then assessed against the assessment criteria by a panel of peer reviewers. The overall scores from the panel assessment 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 on the NHMRC website and in the *Centres of Research Excellence 2020 Peer Review Guidelines*.

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 will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible, following the approval of grants. This could be sooner if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons.

NHMRC may advise applicants and their Administering Institution's RAO of the 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 for funding 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 and 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 grantees

Grantees 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 in relation to ethics and biosafety, NHMRC-funded Research Activities must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies. 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 and ethical 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 *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.* Further information about the Code can be found on NHMRC's website.

10.4 NHMRC policies

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

For further information on the expectations of Administering Institutions and CIs, see NHMRC's website.

10.5 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.

10.6 Suspension of grants

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.

10.7 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.

11 Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on the GrantConnect website within 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by the CGRGs.

12 How NHMRC monitors grant activity

12.1 Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees should report and seek approval of a variation to 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. While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, 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 or 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 CRE scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its grant opportunities 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 and

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* as a condition of funding.

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 is to be directed to the Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision. 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
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, and the *Privacy Act 1988*. The NHMRC Privacy Policy details the types of personal or sensitive information that may be collected by NHMRC and how it will be handled. Applicants should familiarise themselves with the NHMRC Privacy Policy before providing personal information to NHMRC.

Information which may properly be regarded as confidential information is to be specifically identified as such by applicants and grantees and will be received by NHMRC on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidentiality.

NHMRC may reveal confidential information to:

- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the grant 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.

13.3   Freedom of information

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government's transparency and accountability requirements. Freedom of Information laws facilitate the general public's access to documents held by national government agencies, including application and funding documentation relating to NHMRC researchers. This right of access is limited where documents, or parts of documents, are exempt under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Researchers should familiarise themselves with NHMRC's Freedom of Information procedures before submitting an application. Further information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, NHMRC's Freedom of Information application process and relevant contacts can be found on the NHMRC website.

14   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 opportunity, 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.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)	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	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	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: • under which relevant money, or other consolidated revenue funds, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth • which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals • which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.
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	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 www.grants.gov.au. Non-corporate Commonwealth entities must publish on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs. Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.
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)	The MRFF was established on 26 August 2015 by the *Medical Research Future Fund* Act 2015 (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health website: https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund.
NHMRC's granting system	NHMRC's electronic grants management solution for grant application, assessment and administration.
Peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.
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	Any event or occurrence which: • 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 • 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.
Schedule	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.
value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a term used in the CGRGs and is a judgement that the grant proposal represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations. 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: • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee's and government's outcomes being achieved • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A. NHMRC structural priorities, Centres of Research Excellence 2020 grant opportunity priorities and funding organisations

A1   NHMRC key structural priorities

Each year, NHMRC identifies key structural priorities for funding to help achieve its broader goals. NHMRC's current key structural priorities are:

- Aboriginal and/or 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 2018, only 7.3% of these grants were for Health Services Research, which is significantly lower than Basic Science at 46.9%, Clinical Medicine and Science at 29.0% and Public Health at 16.8%.

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   Centres of Research Excellence 2020 grant opportunity priority areas

In addition to these key priorities, NHMRC may award CRE grants that:

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

Note: Special Awards have not been identified for this grant opportunity.

Electromagnetic Energy Centres of Research Excellence

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 licence 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 for 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. Eligible applications must be considered fundable by NHMRC in order to receive funding. Applications not in scope will be considered for standard NHMRC funding.

Centres of Research Excellence funded by other organisations

CRE 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 those of 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 CRE grant recipient under the conditions that would have been awarded by NHMRC.

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

Appendix B. CRE 2020 Grant Opportunity Category Descriptors

The following category descriptors, which are equally weighted, are used as a guide to score an application against each of the assessment criteria. Categories 1–3 are not fundable. Categories 4–7 are potentially fundable, subject to the availability of resources.

While the category descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met.

The category descriptors are a guide to a "best fit" outcome. Peer reviewers will consistently refer to these category descriptors to ensure thorough, equitable and transparent assessment of applications.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and/or 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.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
7 **Outstanding by International Standards**	The proposal: • has objectives that are well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed • is exemplary in design • is state of the art in concept • will be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international meetings, often with relevance across several fields • is highly innovative and introduces advances in concept • is highly feasible.	The proposal: • addresses an issue of utmost importance to human health • will translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health or fundamental changes in health policy • the published research will be highly influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice • high degree of involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: • includes a strong strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development • includes impressive measures for integrating new researchers into teams.	The proposal: • would be highly effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has very strong relationships with other researchers • very high degree of team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: • are generally the most outstanding translation-oriented researchers in the country for their peers/cohort • have very strong records of other research-related achievements • have strong international reputations or are well on the way to developing them • hold leadership positions in highly regarded scientific or professional societies • are highly recognised for their contribution to their field of research, including those promoting knowledge translation.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
6 *Excellent*	The proposal: • is clear in its intent and logical • has an excellent design • is appropriate for the experience level of the applicant and team • could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international and national meetings • is innovative with respect to the question being addressed and the approach to it • is highly feasible.	The proposal: • addresses an issue of major importance to human health • the published research should be very influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice • extensive involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: • includes a well-articulated strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development • includes well-articulated measures for integrating new researchers into teams.	The proposal: • would be effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has strong relationships with other researchers • has a high degree of team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: • have a record of translation- oriented research achievement that places them in the top 10–20% of peers/cohort • have a growing international reputation • have established a position of leadership, or are emerging leaders, in their field • hold leadership positions in well regarded scientific or professional societies • are well recognised for their contribution to their field of research, including those promoting knowledge translation.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
5 *Very Good*	The proposal: - has clear objectives - any reservations regarding study design are minor - could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national specialty meetings - contains innovative ideas - will likely be successfully achieved.	The proposal: - addresses an issue of considerable importance to human health - the published research will be influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice - relatively extensive involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: - includes a persuasive strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development - includes articulated measures for integrating new researchers into teams.	The proposal: - would be reasonably effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange - has good relationships with other researchers - has good team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: - have a record of translation- oriented research achievement, that places them well above average for their peers/cohort - have a growing national reputation and their research appears frequently at national meetings - are well recognised for their contribution to their field of research, including those promoting knowledge translation.
4 *Good*	The proposal: - is sound in terms of its objectives - may have some novel aspects, while others underpin or extend existing knowledge - but has several areas of minor concern in the experimental design and/or its feasibility.	The proposal: - addresses an issue of some importance to human health - the published research may be influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice - some involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: - includes a strategy that should generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development - includes articulated measures that should integrate new researchers into teams.	The proposal: - would have some effectiveness in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange - has positive relationships with other researchers - has a degree of team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity: - the applicants have a solid record of translation- oriented research achievement - one or more of the CIs has an existing or emerging national reputation, albeit in a niche area - the applicants have made contributions to their field of research, including those promoting knowledge translation.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
3 *Marginal*	The proposal: • is satisfactory in terms of its objectives, but may not be successful with all of them • contains some study design problems or flaws • has a number of areas of significant concern • has relatively little novelty or innovation.	The proposal: • addresses an issue of some concern to human health • published research is unlikely to be influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice • little involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: • includes a weak strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development • includes few measures to integrate new researchers into teams.	The proposal: • may be effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has some viable relationships with other researchers, although weak • has minimal team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: • have a moderate record of translation-oriented research achievement • have published a number of works in a field relevant to this application in the last 5 years, but many have been less productive than might reasonably be expected • are deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research • have limited track records in the field of the proposed research, including those promoting knowledge translation.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
2 *Unsatisfactory*	The proposal: • provides a program of research which will at best, only incrementally advance current knowledge • contains a study design which is inadequate in a number of areas • is not innovative or significant • contains a research plan which does not seem to be feasible in several areas.	The proposal: • addresses an issue of only marginal concern to human health • only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or previously well used approaches • published research is unlikely to be influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice • there are concerns about successful completion • virtually no involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: • does not articulate a viable strategy to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development • has few viable measures to integrate new researchers into teams.	The proposal: • raises doubts about its effectiveness in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has little evidence of relationships with other researchers • has little or no evidence of team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: • have a weak record of translation-oriented research achievement • have not published more than a few works in relevant other fields of research • are heavily underpowered in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program • have track records which are not significantly translation-oriented.

Category	Generate new knowledge that leads to improved health outcomes	Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into health policy and/or practice	Develop the health and medical research workforce	Facilitate collaboration	Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity
1 Poor	The proposal: - will not advance current knowledge in the field - contains a study design which is inappropriate in most areas - is not innovative or significant - raises major concerns about the feasibility of the research plan.	The proposal: - does not address an issue of concern to human health - successful completion is unlikely - publication of research won't be influential in the promotion of change in policy and/or practice - no involvement of end-users and the wider community.	The proposal: - is unlikely to generate new researcher capability, mentoring and career development - has few if any measures to integrate new researchers into teams.	The proposal: - would be unlikely to promote working collaborations and intellectual exchange - has no evidence of relationships with other researchers - has no evidence of team integration and cohesiveness.	Relative to opportunity, the applicants: - are not productive in a research translation sense to any significant extent in relevant fields - do not have the expertise or capacity to successfully complete more than a small fraction of the program of research - do not have relevant translation-oriented track records in the field of the proposed research.

Appendix C. NHMRC 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.

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 schemes 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.[1]

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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[1] 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.

Appendix D. Centres of Research Excellence 2020 Guide to Applicants

1. Preparing an application

The following sections provide additional advice about parts of the application that are specific to the Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) scheme.

- Applicants should refer to the RGMS User Guide - Introduction to RGMS for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in RGMS.
- Centres of Research Excellence scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in RGMS (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, see section 7 of the Guidelines.

2. Application Requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completion of mandatory sections of My Profile and CV (Appendix D, sections 4 and 5)
- Completed application form (Appendix D, section 6)
- Grant Proposal as an attachment (Appendix D, section 7)

Applications must comply with all rules and requirements as set out in the Guidelines. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements will result in non-acceptance or exclusion of your application (see section 4 of the Guidelines).

2.1 Minimum Data Requirements

Minimum data must be entered in RGMS by the specified due date to allow NHMRC to start identifying suitable peer reviewers. Minimum data are comprised of:

- Chief Investigator A and names of team members if known (note: team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of applications)
- Administering institution
- Application title
- Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Research (yes/no)
- Synopsis
- Participating Institution/s
- Research Classification (all fields)
- Privacy Consent – Int'l

Minimum data must be entered into RGMS by 17:00 Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on 20 November 2019. Applicants should refer to section 7.3 of the CRE 2020 Guidelines for further information.

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

Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications require certification only once complete and ready for submission to NHMRC.

3.   Key Changes

Applicants should note the following changes for CRE 2020 grant opportunity applications:

- Applicants are no longer required to submit detailed application budgets.
- The CRE in Population Health Research stream has been renamed the CRE in Public Health Research.
- Additional funding may be available to support health and medical research on the health effects of radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) (see Appendix A and Appendix D section 7.2).

4.   Profile Requirements

Within an applicant's profile in RGMS, there is mandatory information that must be provided and/or updated prior to submitting an application (see section 7 of the Guidelines). This information includes personal details, academic/research interests, and peer review information.

Mandatory Profile information is indicated by a red asterisk in RGMS. This requirement applies to all Chief Investigators named on the application. It is advisable to check that each of the CIs has completed and/or updated their profiles before an application is certified. Existing NHMRC grant holders cannot commence or be named on an application until all mandatory Profile fields are complete.

4.1   Pro-PD Personal Details

Provide your most current details in this section. It is important that your title, names, phone and email details are up to date as these are the details on which NHMRC relies to contact you.

4.2   Pro-PN: Panel Nominations and Invitations

Please indicate which, if any, schemes you have nominated or been invited to participate in as a potential peer reviewer.

4.3   Pro-PU: Peer Review Unavailability

Peer Review is an integral part of NHMRC funding schemes. NHMRC grant recipients have obligations to contribute to the assessment of applications (as outlined in the *NHMRC Funding Agreement*). If you are not available to act as a peer reviewer, please provide a statement detailing your reasons, and the period for which you are unavailable. To maintain the list of available peer reviewers within RGMS, NHMRC requires that all applicants update their availability routinely. This will avoid unnecessary contact if you are unavailable.

4.4   Pro-A: Address

Provide details of the address you wish to use if NHMRC needs to contact you via the postal service. Home addresses are acceptable.

4.5   Pro-RE: Research Interests

Select a Broad Research Area and 5-10 Research Keywords most applicable to your main area of research. In addition, provide 1-3 keywords to describe your core research methodologies or areas of methodological expertise (e.g. clinical trials, gene therapy, etc.). You may also provide further detail about your research interests or areas of expertise. This could include, but is not limited to, your research methodologies, student supervision and areas in which you have published (*maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks*).

Note: An opportunity is provided in the application to select research areas, fields of research and keywords that best describe your research proposal, as opposed to your personal research interests. The above information will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

4.6 Pro-FR: Fields of Research

You can add as many Fields of Research as required. Indicate when you started your research in that field and whether the research is current or terminated. Individuals are encouraged to list all Fields of Research but highlight their main Field of Research as "current".

5. CV Requirements

The following sections provide advice about parts of the application that are specific to the CRE 2020 grant opportunity. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, you are only required to complete the sections outlined below. Should you enter more information than is required, only the required information will be imported into your application.

It is important that relevant CV information (for all CIs) is up to date at the time of application submission, as it is used to contact applicants, imported into the application, and used by peer reviewers. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile and to capture grant outcomes. CV information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made to the CV profile (for any CI) after Chief Investigator A (CIA) certification will not appear in the submitted application.

Instructions for entering CV information in RGMS are provided in the *RGMS User Guide - Introduction to RGMS*

Note: You are required to list research outputs in relevant subsections of your CV profile. You are encouraged to link the entered research output to NHMRC Grant IDs, where applicable.

5.1 CV-CD: Career Disruption

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly, and this means that it recognises some applicants will have had career disruptions that should be considered when evaluating their track record and eligibility. If applicable, applicants should use this opportunity to declare any career disruptions that may be relevant to their career history. This will ensure that applications are assessed objectively, and with all relevant factors taken into account.

The period of career disruption may be used to determine an applicant's eligibility for a grant opportunity or to allow additional track record information to be considered during assessment.

Career Disruption

A career disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities. For guidance on what constitutes a career disruption and how it is considered, refer to Appendix C.

> To enter a Career Disruption, select the 'New' button. Select a 'Reason' from the drop down box.
>
> Career disruption claims will not be considered for applications that fail to comply with the following requirements.
>
> **Impact**
>
> Applicants are required to provide a brief explanation of the impact the career disruption(s) has had on their research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to their career stage. Applicants should not describe the nature of the career disruption in this field. Note that

the information in this field will be provided to peer reviewers (*maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks*).

Additional Publication Outputs

Provide details of publications only that you would like to claim in relation to this Career Disruption (*maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks*).

Dates

Applicants are required to nominate the periods when they have had a disruption (approximate dates).

5.2   CV-RO: Relative to Opportunity

If applicable, the applicant should use this opportunity to provide details of any relative to opportunity considerations and the effect they have had on their research and research achievements (see Appendix C).

Circumstance

Provide a brief explanation of the type of relative to opportunity circumstance *(maximum of 200 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

Impact

Provide a brief explanation on the impact this has had on your research and research achievements and associated productivity relative to stage of career (*maximum of 1500 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

Date

You are required to nominate the periods where you have had a relative to opportunity circumstance (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

5.3   CV-RF: NHMRC Research Funding

Click 'New' to start a new entry of any previous and/or current NHMRC funding, including offers received for future funding. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

NHMRC grants previously awarded to you are automatically pre-populated. However, you should verify this information and notify NHMRC if there are any discrepancies.

Provide sufficient details to make clear what the funding was intended for, what you achieved and your role within these grants. You should ensure that your role is clearly defined on each grant, so that peer reviewers can readily identify your contribution to the grant.

5.4   CV-ORF: Other Research Funding

Click 'New' to start a new entry of any previous and/or current funding from sources other than NHMRC, including offers received for future funding. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order. Provide as many details as you can in the spaces provided.

Provide sufficient details to make clear what the funding was intended for, what you achieved and your role within these grants. You should ensure that your role is clearly defined on each grant, so that peer reviewers can readily identify your contribution to the grant.

5.5   CV-Pub: Publications

Publication information can be uploaded using a tab delimited file using Microsoft Excel® or by exporting your EndNote® Library as an .xml file. Further details on how to upload publications are provided in the *RGMS User Guide - Introduction to RGMS* and on the CV-PU: Publication Uploads page in RGMS.

NHMRC accepts nine types of publication: Journal Articles (Original Research), Journal Articles (Review), Books/Chapters, Research Report – commissioned by Government, industry or other, Technical Report, Text Book, Accepted for Publication, Editorials and Letters to the Editor.

Your publications will be grouped together by the type of publication. They will also automatically be given an RGMS Identification Number (ID). DO NOT use the RGMS ID number or RGMS sequence number created in the 'Snapshot Reports' to refer to specific publications in other sections of your application.

6.   Part A: Application form requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to CRE 2020 grant opportunity applications, and must be completed as part of your application. Step-by-step instructions for entering application details in RGMS are provided in the *RGMS User Guide - Introduction to RGMS* and in the *RGMS User Guide – Applying for grants*.

6.1   Creating an application

Click 'New Application' from the Applications tab of the main menu.

Initiative

Select Centres of Research Excellence as the initiative.

Round

Select the funding round. For example, 2019 XXXX funding commencing in 2020.

Application Identification Number (RGMS ID)

Each application will have its own unique Application Identification Number (Application ID), which is generated by RGMS. Please use this Application ID number (e.g. APP#######) to identify your application when referring to it in any correspondence.

Administering Institution

Select your Administering Institution by clicking the 'Browse' (🔍) icon. There can be only one Administering Institution for each application. You must ensure that the institution you choose as your Administering Institution is the correct institution for your application. If in doubt, contact the RAO at your proposed Administering Institution.

Application Title

The application title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and should accurately describe the nature of the research proposal *(maximum of 250 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

Note: This information will be used for reporting purposes. It is important that spelling is correct and that any acronyms are spelled out in full.

Grant Duration

Select the requested duration of your grant with reference to any limits specified in the Guidelines. For a CRE 2020 grant opportunity application, select five years.

RAO edit access

If you wish to allow your Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO) to have edit rights to your application, you should select 'Yes'. NHMRC provides this functionality to support researchers and RAOs in managing the application process. NHMRC does not accept any responsibility for errors or omissions arising from the use of the RAO edit function and strongly recommends that RAOs, CIAs and Administering Institution(s) discuss the management of RAO edit access before selecting this function.

Click 'Save and Return'.

6.2   General Properties

This screen will be pre-populated from your selections in the 'Create Application' page:

- Application ID
- Initiative
- Round
- Administering Institution
- Application Title
- Grant Duration
- Status

Mark for Deletion

Selecting the 'Yes' option will authorise NHMRC to delete this application. After clicking 'Save' the application will no longer be available for viewing or editing.

Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Health Research

This question enables you to identify research that specifically investigates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues. It is also designed to enable NHMRC to identify those research proposals that will require assessment of the proposed research against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

You should only select 'Yes' if you can demonstrate that at least 20% of your research effort and/or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

If you have answered 'Yes' to this question, you will be required to provide details of how your application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* in your Grant Proposal. Your application may be assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

Synopsis

The synopsis should accurately, and briefly, summarise the research proposal. This information may be used to assign applications to panels and peer reviewers. It may also be considered in the peer review process *(maximum of 2000 character limit including spaces and line breaks).*

Plain English Summary

Describe the overall aims of the research and expected outcomes in simple terms that could be understood by the general public. Avoid the use of highly technical terms. This information may be used in grant announcements, media releases and other public documents, and by funding

partners (where applicable) to determine whether the research proposal meets their priorities for funding *(maximum of 500 character limit including spaces and line breaks)*.

Privacy Notice

Please ensure that you have carefully read and understood the NHMRC Privacy Policy, prior to completing the application. If you have not understood the Privacy Policy or require further clarification, please contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601).

Consent to provide information to International Assessors

Under amendments to the *Privacy Act 1988* that took effect in March 2014, NHMRC requires your consent to send your personal information overseas, for the purposes of peer review of applications.

Consent to disclose personal information to other organisations

If you wish to be considered for funding by other organisations (e.g. a co-funder), please select yes for Partner Organisation Consent. By selecting 'Yes' you are consenting to NHMRC providing your application information to potential funding partners should your application fit the funding partner's research funding objectives. For a list of funding partners, please refer to the CRE 2020 Guidelines on GrantConnect. If there is a particular funding partner(s) to which you do not want your application referred, your RAO should advise NHMRC of this by emailing the NHMRC Research Help Centre (help@nhmrc.gov.au).

6.3   A-Pinst: Institutions - Participating

In some cases, the institution that will administer your application may differ from the institution in which you will actually conduct the proposed research. For example, many universities administer research which will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. This information is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application.

Research Effort (%)

If the research will be conducted at more than one institution, enter the Research Effort percentage (%) allocated to each participating institution and department. The percentages (%) entered must total 100% *(maximum of 100 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

Institution

In this section you will need to list the Participating Institution and department where the proposed research will be conducted.

Complete this page for each institution if there is more than one. If the participating institution does not appear in the list please email the institution name to the RHC (help@nhmrc.gov.au).

6.4   A-RC: Research Classification

The details entered in this section will be used in the peer review process to assist with the allocation of your application to the most relevant peer review panel and to aid the selection of appropriate peer reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's Funding Profile.

All fields on this page are mandatory and must be completed to meet minimum data requirements.

You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

Guide to Peer Review Areas

Three nominations are required and should be listed in order of relevance to the research proposal. You should also refer to the Australian Standard Research Classifications and NHMRC Research Keywords and Phrases.

Note: the same Peer Review Area can be nominated three times, if appropriate.

Broad Research Area
Field of Research
Field of Research and Subcategory
Research Keywords/Phrases

6.5   A–BoD: Burden of Disease

Select a Burden of Disease that best describes the area of research of the application. You can select up to three Burden of Disease types and you must allocate a percentage (%) of time against each. The percentage (%) total must not exceed 100%.

6.6   A-RT: Research Team

You may include a maximum of ten Chief Investigators (CIs) and ten Associate Investigators (AIs) in your research team. For further information of the eligibility requirements for CIs and AIs, please refer to section 4 of the Guidelines.

List all members of research team including CIs, AIs, Professional Research Personnel (PRP) and Technical Support Staff (TSS). Complete a separate entry for each member of the team by selecting 'New'.

Researcher Details [Chief Investigators, Associate Investigators]

Position title [Chief Investigators, Associate Investigators]

This field is optional; you can use titles to identify specific PRP or TSS roles.

Person [Chief Investigators, Associate Investigators]

All CIs must have an active RGMS account in order to be listed as part of the CI team. Use the browse function to search active RGMS account holders for your team member.

CIs that cannot be located using the browse function will need to obtain an RGMS account.

If the candidate is an AI and cannot be located using the browse function, then you may enter their details manually in the fields provided.

Role [Chief Investigators only]

Select CIB-CIJ from the drop down box.

Australian Based [Chief Investigators only]

Indicate whether the Chief Investigator will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.

Qualifications and Skills [Chief Investigators only]

Outline the qualifications and skills relevant to the grant proposal for each Chief Investigator *(maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

> **Professional Research Person**
>
> *Position Title*
>
> This may be used for identifying a specific PRP or TSS role – i.e. Registered Nurse, Animal Handler etc.
>
> **Technical Support Staff**
>
> *Position Title*
>
> This may be used for identifying a specific PRP or TSS role – i.e. Registered Nurse, Animal Handler etc.
>
> **A-RT: Cancel Nomination**
>
> This page can be used to remove a team member from the application up until the CIA certifies the application.
>
> **A-RT: Swap CI**
>
> This page can be used to swap two existing CI roles up until the CIA certifies the application.

6.7 A-EG: Ethics General

If you answer "Yes" to any of the questions, you will need to obtain ethics approvals and supply evidence of these to your research office in the event your application is funded. For further information, see *Ethics and Integrity* on the [NHMRC website](#).

7. Part B: Application Form Requirements

7.1 B-GP: Grant Proposal

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

- links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online; where links are included, provide the URL in full (e.g. the NHMRC website https://www.nhmrc.gov.au)
- publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, consistent with the recommendations from the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

The grant proposal must be written in English and submitted in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, using NHMRC's Grant Proposal template, which will be available on GrantConnect. Applicants must use this template. The grant proposal must be uploaded into RGMS.

> **Grant Proposal (Upload)**
>
> To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the document from the location that it has been saved to by double clicking on it. The name will be displayed in the 'Choose File' field. Click 'Save' or 'Save and return' to upload the document.
>
> To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants should open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document name after the document has been saved in RGMS.

Naming and formatting requirements for the grant proposal are listed in Table 1. Applications that fail to comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

Details to be addressed in the grant proposal and associated page limits are set out in Table 2. Applicants should note that peer reviewers will, as part of their assessment, consider the reproducibility and applicability of the proposed research and research design. Within the experimental design of the proposal, applicants should include sufficient information to demonstrate that robust and unbiased results will be produced.

Table 1: Formatting Requirements

Component	Component Requirements
File format	The grant proposal must be saved and uploaded as a PDF file
File size	The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named using the following: APP ID_Applicant's Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf E.g.: APP1234567_Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Header	Application ID and CIA surname must be included in the header Document title (e.g. Grant Proposal – CRE) must be included in the header
Footer	Page number must be included in the footer
Font	NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12 point Times New Roman font. Applicants must ensure the font is readable.
Line spacing	Single
Language	English

Table 2: Grant Proposal Components

Component	Page Limit
Cover page	1
Response to assessment criteria	20 pages
CI track record	2 pages per CI
AI contribution, if applicable	¼ page per AI
Consumer and community participation, if applicable	1
References	4 pages
Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, if applicable	2 pages

A brief description of each component is provided below.

Cover Page

The cover page should include:

- application ID
- title of CRE

- a list of Chief Investigators, including research title (e.g. CIA), academic title (e.g. Professor), given names and family name.

Response to Assessment Criteria – 20 pages

Address the assessment criteria as specified in section 6 of the Guidelines. All text in this component must be under the heading of the assessment criterion that is being addressed. Headings must include the assessment criterion number and title.

Responses should provide sufficient information for the research approach to be assessed by peer reviewers, either by reference to published work or by including the essential components which may include research plan, methods and techniques to be used. Consideration should be given to the crucial design elements that enhance reproducibility of research findings. Where appropriate, the following should be addressed:

- detailed description of the experiment design, including any research facility services required
- techniques to be used
- details and justification of controls
- details for appropriate blinding
- strategies for randomisation and/or stratification
- justification of sample-size, including power calculation
- justification of statistical methods
- strategies to compensate for the effects of sex-differences, different animal strains and/or different end-points.

References cited in this document are to be listed in the separate References section.

CI Track Record – 2 pages per CI

This section has two components:

- the top five publications in the last five years
- overall track record in the last five years.

Top five publications in the last five years

Applicants are asked to list their top five publications in the last five years and reasons why these publications have been selected.

Note: Reviewers will use this information to assess the track record quality of the research team.

Overall track record in the last five years

Applicants are encouraged to use this section to identify aspects of their track record that are in addition to their publication record. This includes any relative to opportunity considerations they wish the peer reviewers to take into consideration. Peer reviewers will have access to the last five years of publications through the CV/Profile section. Therefore, the following areas may be considered:

- career summary – including qualifications, employment and appointment history
- contribution to field of research – this may include the impact of previous research including translation of research into health outcomes
- patents – this information should include if the patent has been licensed, when they have been licensed, to whom they have been licensed and if that licence is current or not

- collaborations

- community engagement and participation

- professional involvement – including committees, conference organisation, conference participation

- international standing – including invitations to speak, international committees

- supervision and mentoring

- peer review involvement (including NHMRC, other granting organisations, manuscripts, editorial responsibilities)

- other contributions to NHMRC

- any other information the applicant thinks is vital to the application.

Note: Peer reviewers will use this information along with each CI's publication record from the CV/Profile section as an indicator of the productivity of the research team.

Associate Investigator (AI) Contribution – ¼ page per AI

For each AI named at Part A-RT: Associate Investigator, outline their contribution to the research project.

There are no restrictions on individuals who may be named as an AI on an application, however a maximum of 10 AIs may be added to a CRE application.

Consumer and Community Participation – 1 page

If the intended research involves consumer and/or community participation:

- Applicants should describe how they will ensure that research participants will have access to their own results, and how they will be accountable to participants for the overall results of the research

- Applicants should describe how they will ensure that consumers will be involved in the research and how they will communicate the results of the research to participants and the community.

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Inc. (CHF) and the NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research (the Statement). The Statement was developed in recognition of the contribution that consumers can make to research, as well as their right to participate in research.

Further information on the CHF and the Statement is available on the [NHMRC's website.](#).

References – 4 pages

References for the Research Proposal must:

- not exceed 4 pages

- provide a list of all references cited in the application in an appropriate standard journal format (NHMRC prefers the Author-date (also known as the Harvard System), Documentary-note and the Vancouver Systems)

- list authors in the order in which they appear in PubMed

- only include references to cited work

- must be written in English.

Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria – 2 pages, where applicable

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.

Complete this section if at least 20% of your research effort and/or capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and you answered 'yes' to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research question within RGMS.

Applicants should ensure that they address each *Indigenous Research Excellence Criterion* as set out in section 6.1 of the Guidelines.

7.2   B-CD: Career Disruption

Select response from the drop down box to indicate if any member of the CI team is claiming a Career Disruption (CD) through their CV. Details must be entered at CV-CD for the relevant CI (see section 5.1).

7.3   B-SP: Strategic Priorities

Electromagnetic Energy

Applicants applying for Electromagnetic Energy (EME) funding will be required to provide a justification that the application aligns with the research agenda into Radio Frequency (RF) EME and health outlined in the 2017 ARPANSA Technical Report '*Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy and Health: Research Needs'* (see Appendix A of the CRE 2020 Guidelines).

Select this field if your application is to be considered for EME funding.

Provide a justification of how your research proposal meets the criteria as RF research (*maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks*).

8.   Certifying your application

Once all Profile and CV details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in RGMS. Certification is required of both the CIA and Administering Institution. Refer to section 7.7 of the Guidelines for further details.

Before completing these steps:

Review the application to ensure it is accurate and complete and meets all eligibility/application requirements. The following tools are available to assist applicants in checking their applications:

- An indicative eligibility checklist is provided in RGMS. This tool should not be solely relied upon to confirm eligibility prior to submitting an application. Applicants retain responsibility for confirming that their application satisfies the stated eligibility requirements.

- For funding schemes where the applicant has nominated a research budget, the summary tab automatically generates a summary of the requested budget from the relevant sections (see the RGMS User Guide - Applying for Grants).

- A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at section 9 of this Appendix of this document.

- Ensure you have read and understood the assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings required of CIAs and Administering Institutions as part of this step. These are outlined in section 7.7 of the Guidelines.

- Note that certification will lock down the application and prevent further editing. The final snapshot produced at this time will include relevant information from your Profile and CV, any subsequent changes to these areas of RGMS will not appear on the application. If changes are needed after CIA certification but before submission to NHMRC, your RAO will need to reject the application in order for you to make the changes.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in RGMS are provided in the Applying for Grants user guide available on the RGMS Training Program webpage.

Once submitted to NHMRC, your application will be considered final and no changes can be made unless the application is withdrawn for amendment prior to the closing date.

9. Checklist for applicants

Before creating an application:

- Ensure RGMS Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory profile fields are complete
- Familiarise yourself with the Guidelines and RGMS User Guide - Introduction to RGMS and the RGMS User Guide – Applying for grants
- Check application lodgement close date and time
- Update your RGMS Profile and CV in accordance with requirements set out in this document
- Read the relevant ethical guidelines/associated documentation if ethics approval is required for the proposed application
- Inform your RAO of your intention to submit an application
- Be aware of any Administering Institution internal deadlines and requirements for submission.

During the creation of an application:

- Check any minimum data requirements
- Check eligibility requirements
- Complete all parts of the application
- Create and upload your Grant Proposal
- Identify any relative to opportunity considerations, including career disruptions, where applicable, within your application
- Consider any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander requirements your application may have, including addressing any additional selection criteria
- Make sure all required attachments are uploaded, including academic transcript, supervisor's referee report and supervisor's CV, if appropriate.

Before submitting an application:

- Read and understand the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018. Submission of an application indicates that the Administering Institution and research team understand and will comply with all obligations set out in the Code.
- Check your compliance with formatting and page requirements
- Ensure any Approvals or licences are acquired or applied for
- Check all information is correct and complete
- Familiarise yourself with your obligations should you be successful

- Certify the application and ensure RAO certification and submission occurs before the close date and time.

Remember, your RAO is your primary contact for advice and assistance. RAOs will contact the Research Help Centre for further advice if required.