



Centres of Research Excellence 2024 Guidelines

Opening date:	18 October 2023
Closing date and time:	17.00 ACT local time on 29 November 2023
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Enquiries:	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance are to direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)▪ Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13:00 ACT local time on 29 November 2023.</p> <p>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 longer during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p> <p>Submission of a registration form and activation of a Sapphire account must occur at least 72 hours before application close, noting that account activation processes cannot be guaranteed in less than this time.</p>
Date guidelines released:	4 September 2023
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

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1. Centres of Research Excellence 2024: 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.



The grant opportunity opens

NHMRC publishes the grant opportunity guidelines on GrantConnect.



Minimum Data deadline

Application Fields marked with a flag must be completed and not contain placeholder text.



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.



Applications are 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.



Grant decisions are made

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



NHMRC notifies applicants of the outcome



Applicant's Administering Institution signs the NHMRC Grant Schedule(s) setting out the grant activity



Delivery of grant

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



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 grant opportunity guidelines (guidelines) contain information for the Centres of Research Excellence (CRE) 2024 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 grants 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 2024 grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

Commonwealth funding for this grant opportunity, including where future or additional funding opportunities are indicated, is subject to the relevant Commonwealth Government funding policy and priorities at the time of notification and accordingly may be subject to change. This may affect the funding available, and its timing, provided under this grant opportunity. Any such changes will be notified as soon as possible.

NHMRC recognises the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australia's health and medical research community. *NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity Policy* specifies that circumstances associated with the pandemic and other calamities are considered, where applicable, in assessment of an applicant's track record. In their application, applicants may outline the interruption and impact on their research productivity.

1.1.1. About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and the integrity of, health and medical research. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program in accordance with 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 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 research, clinical medicine and science research, public health research and health services research.

2. About the grant program

Funding for the program will be provided from the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), which is underpinned by section 51 of the NHMRC Act.

The objectives of the CRE scheme are to:

- improve health outcomes
- promote or improve translation of research outcomes into policy and/or practice

- 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 knowledge gain, health policy and/or practice
- foster and build capacity and capability in the health and medical research workforce
- provide opportunities to expand and improve collaborations between research teams.

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

NHMRC's [Research Translation Strategy 2022-2025](#) describes research translation as activities that use the results of research to inform, for example, the next stage of research, new research or research re-design, public policy, health-related systems and practice, or support the commercialisation of research discoveries, for the improvement of individual and population health. All types of research knowledge are valuable and can be translated (e.g. biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research).

The CRE 2024 grant opportunity will provide support for teams of researchers to pursue collaborative research and develop capacity in basic science research, clinical research, health services research and public health research. Applicants nominate the application stream that best fits their research proposal. The following definitions are provided to assist applicants to select the appropriate stream.

- Basic science research seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use, but is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.
- Clinical research seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.
- Health services research seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.
- Public health research seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

2.1. Key changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the CRE 2024 grant opportunity:

- The funding allocation to the CRE scheme has increased and the funding distribution across CRE streams has changed (Section 3).
- Funding is available for CRE in Basic Science Research grants, including for dementia research with a basic science research focus (Section 3 and [Appendix A2](#)).
- CRE assessment criteria and score descriptors have been amended to incorporate assessment of CRE in Basic Science Research stream applications (Section 6 and [Appendix B](#)).
- Guidance is provided on addressing research translation ([Appendix C](#), section 7.7).

2.2. NHMRC structural priorities and CRE 2024 priorities

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 also identifies structural priorities for funding to deliver against certain strategic priorities. Information on NHMRC's structural priorities and CRE 2024 priorities is provided in [Appendix A](#).

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the CRE 2024 grant opportunity is up to \$60 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 5 CREs in Basic Science Research; including one for dementia research with a basic science research focus
- up to 5 CREs in Clinical Research
- up to 5 CREs in Health Services Research
- up to 5 CREs in Public Health Research

A CRE 2024 grant in the Basic Science Research, Clinical Research, Health Services Research and Public Health Research streams provides a fixed budget of \$3 million per grant, paid evenly over the grant period.

3.2. Grant period

A CRE 2024 grant is awarded for a five-year term.

4. Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC Administering Institutions is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

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

Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information 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 of the decision.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before the submission of minimum data. Grant offers may be withdrawn if eligibility criteria are not maintained. Action may also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

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 2024 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 may undertake research on a part-time basis for all or part of the duration of the grant.

CIs are expected to remain on the grant activity for the duration of the grant, unless a variation is approved by NHMRC in accordance with the [NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy](#). NHMRC will only approve a change in CIs in exceptional circumstances and a variation request must not be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

Associate Investigators

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 AIs may be named. Up to 10 can be entered in Sapphire.

4.2. Multiple applications/grants

4.2.1. Limits on the number of CRE applications

Duplicate applications must not be submitted across multiple CRE streams. Applicants must select the CRE stream that best fits the Broad Research Area of their research proposal based on the stream definitions provided in Section 2. Duplicate applications may be ineligible and excluded from consideration.

Note: Applications to the CRE scheme are not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants and will not affect a CI's eligibility to apply to the latter schemes (refer to the respective scheme grant opportunity guidelines for eligibility requirements).

4.2.2. Limits on the number of CRE grants that may be held

There is no limit to the number of CRE grants that a CI may hold concurrently. However, the amount of time committed by the CIs on the proposed CRE grant will be considered in the assessment 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 as part of the feasibility of the proposed research (see Section 6).

4.3. Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if NHMRC identifies that:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in these guidelines
- it, or the CIA/any CI named on the application, contravenes an applicable law or code, or
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the MREA.

An application will be excluded if 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 findings of a serious breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (the Code) (including a finding of research misconduct, where this term is used) or a Probit Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the [NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#) available from the [NHMRC website](#).

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

If a decision is made to exclude an application from further consideration, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO). The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision. 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 grant activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that grant activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#).

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, can draw a salary from the CRE 2024 grant if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period. CIs based overseas cannot draw a salary, but the grant can be used to provide salary support 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 all NHMRC grants held. Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to 100%, if allowed in the guidelines for the respective grant opportunities.

Associate Investigators cannot draw a salary from CRE 2024 grants.

5.2. Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

CRE 2024 grant funds are provided to support research costs in Australia. Funding can 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. In doing so, the CIA must clearly demonstrate that 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 grant 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 Aged Care) 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.

6. The assessment criteria

Applications for CRE 2024 grants are assessed by peers against the assessment criteria listed below and the score descriptors in [Appendix B](#).

Track records are assessed [Relative to Opportunity](#), taking into consideration any career disruptions, where applicable.

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

Criterion One

Generate new knowledge that leads to a paradigm shift in understanding of a basic science outcome and/or a practice shift leading to improved health or health systems outcomes (20%)

- Clarity of research objectives and theoretical concepts
- Research design(s) and/or proposed methodology/ies are robust and appropriate to the broader strategy of the proposed Centre
- Aims and concepts of the research are innovative or pioneering
- Has the potential to generate significant new findings and advance knowledge in the field
- Feasibility of the proposed research.

Criterion Two

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

- Significance and impact for human health and/or basic science
- Quality of the plan for research translation* and maximising impact, including interaction with commercial groups where appropriate
- Plans for promoting the Centre's activities to the wider community
- Involvement of consumers and the community in the planning, implementation and uptake of the research program e.g. priority-setting; design and development; governance; communication and/or implementation as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research.

Criterion Three

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

- Strategy to generate new researcher capability through training, mentoring and encouraging further career development
- Strategy to build workforce capacity and capability, including fostering the science of implementation where appropriate
- Clarity of opportunities for integrating new researchers into the teams.

Criterion Four

Facilitate collaboration (20%)

Outline past and/or proposed collaborative arrangements within the Chief Investigator team and address how the team 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 fields of research
- integration and cohesiveness of the team

- roles and responsibilities within the team
- benefits of the proposed Centre beyond the sum of its individual components or previously funded Centre.

Criterion Five

Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity (20%)

- The previous research and/or translation experience of Chief Investigators (CIs) demonstrates that the team has the appropriate mix of research skills and experience to deliver the proposal.
- Record of achievement encompasses the national and international standing of the CIs based upon their research and/or translation achievements, relative to opportunity, including but not limited to:
 - research outputs, such as: publications that illustrate innovation and significance of past accomplishments; outcome and impact of previous research achievements including effects on health care practices or policy and knowledge uptake
 - contribution to field of research, such as: requests to lead discipline thinking through prestigious review invitations, keynote, plenary or named Lectureships; editorial appointments; leadership positions in scientific or professional societies; specialist and high level health policy committee appointments; commercial involvement
 - evidence of research translation, such as: influence on the next stage of research, new research or research re-design; public policy; health-related systems and practice; commercialisation of research discoveries.

* NHMRC's [Research Translation Strategy 2022-2025](#) describes research translation as activities that use the results of research to inform, for example, the next stage of research, new research or research re-design, public policy, health-related systems and practice, or support the commercialisation of research discoveries, for the improvement of individual and population health. All types of research knowledge are valuable and can be translated (e.g. biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research).

The Research Translation Strategy acknowledges that translation is complex and is sometimes referred to as a 'translation pathway' from research through to implementation into policy and practice. Translation can occur at any stage and can follow many different pathways; strategies and activities may need to be modified repeatedly along this pathway. For Basic Science Research stream applications, in addition to informing next steps or new research, applications should address how the interface between the basic science and clinical practice, public health and/or health services is likely to lead to translational outcomes even if these are long term and not within scope for this grant.

6.1. Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

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

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, must refer to the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- [Road map 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](#), which is 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 needs to 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.

Peer reviewer(s) with specific expertise in Indigenous health research will evaluate how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* and ensure the research is being undertaken in a culturally appropriate manner. This evaluation is not given a numerical score but is a yes/no determination that will be taken into consideration in the overall assessment of the application, using the assessment criteria outlined in Section 6 (it does not alter the weighting of the assessment criteria). Confirmation of qualifying applications will be used for reporting measures by NHMRC.

7. How to apply

7.1. Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

18 October 2023	Applications open in Sapphire
17:00 ACT local time 15 November 2023	Minimum data due in Sapphire
17:00 ACT local time 29 November 2023	Applications close in Sapphire
February – May 2024	Anticipated peer review period
August 2024*	Anticipated notification of outcomes

* Date is indicative and subject to change.

Applications must be submitted electronically using Sapphire (unless otherwise advised by NHMRC).

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

Applicants should refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) 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 before the application closing date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or cyclones
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family¹, is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions 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 extensions submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

7.3. Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will be ineligible. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Applications containing placeholder text (including in the application title) such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” at minimum data will be ineligible.

Applicants are discouraged from making any changes to minimum data fields following the minimum data deadline as NHMRC uses minimum data to identify appropriate peer reviewers to assess the application. Incorrect minimum data may result in less suitable peer reviewers assessing the application.

Minimum data fields for CRE 2024 are outlined in [Appendix C](#) Section 4 and within Sapphire.

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 are only to be certified once complete and ready for submission.

7.4. Application requirements

The application must 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 [Appendix C](#).

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 ineligible.

¹ Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).

Additional requirements and guidance for each component of the application are outlined in [Appendix C](#).

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 Sapphire or [Appendix C](#). Only attach requested documents. NHMRC will not consider information in attachments that it does not request.

7.6. Consumer and community involvement

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 Statement's purpose is to guide research institutions, researchers, consumers and community members in the active involvement of consumers and community members in all aspects of health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd (CHF) and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.

To complement the statement, NHMRC has released a Toolkit with resources on consumer and community involvement in, and expectations of, health and medical research. Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers and to use this Toolkit throughout all stages of research, including the planning and preparation of grant applications, the conduct of research and the evaluation of outcomes.

Further information on CHF, the Statement and the Toolkit is available on the [NHMRC website](#). Consumer and community involvement in the proposed research will be considered, as relevant, as part of the applicable assessment criteria (see Section 6).

7.7. Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC Administering Institution using Sapphire.

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 following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA before submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct.
- All eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the grant 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.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements, in accordance with the guidelines.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time.
- The Head of Department of the Administering Institution (and Participating Institution/s, if applicable) will ensure the appropriate facilities will be available.
- The research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.

7.7.2. Certification from other Chief Investigators (CIB-CIJ) and Associate Investigators

By accepting an invitation to participate on an application, Chief and Associate Investigators certify that, at the time of application submission, they:

- agree to be named on the application
- endorse application certification by the Chief Investigator A and submission for endorsement by the Administering Institution's RAO
- 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
- agree to participate in the manner described in the application and to the handling of personal information contained within the application as described in the *NHMRC Privacy Policy*
- have met all eligibility and other application requirements.

7.7.3. Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution before 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.
- CIA is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time of accepting the successful grant.
- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.
- 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 grant activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained before 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.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO 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 in Sapphire.

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 Sapphire before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the grant opportunity has closed. The application will not be deleted while the grant opportunity 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.

All policy enquiries must be submitted in writing by the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC's Research Help Centre. Policy enquiries from applicants will be re-directed to the RAO. Frequently asked policy questions will be addressed via the scheme's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, which will be updated on GrantConnect as required and should be reviewed before submitting a query.

NHMRC's Research Help Centre details:

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

Email: 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.

As per section 11 of the CGRGs, the extent to which applications represent value with relevant money is considered as part of the broader score descriptors in [Appendix B](#). This consideration guides assessment of applications against the scheme's objectives and intended outcomes (Section 2), the relative value of the grant sought, the quality of the proposed research and the track record or capability of the applicant(s).

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 research that provides value with money 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 may constitute 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

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness. Peer review processes are fair and seen to be fair by all involved.
- Transparency. All stages of peer review are transparent.
- Independence. Peer reviewers provide independent advice. There is also independent oversight of peer review processes by independent Chairs and Observers.
- Appropriateness and balance. The experience, expertise and operation of peer reviewers are appropriate to the goals and scale of the funding vehicle.
- Research community participation. Persons holding taxpayer-funded grants should willingly make themselves available to participate in peer review processes, including mentoring of junior researchers, whenever possible.
- Confidentiality. Participants respect that confidentiality is important to the fairness and robustness of peer review.
- Impartiality. Peer review is objective and impartial, with appropriate processes in place to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest (CoI).
- Quality and excellence. NHMRC will continue to introduce evidence-based improvements into its processes to achieve the highest quality decision-making through peer review.

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. CRE 2024 applications with an overall score above 3.500 are potentially fundable, subject to the availability of funds.

The top ranked CRE in Basic Science Research stream application to have nominated for dementia-specific research funding consideration will be recommended for funding, if it achieves an overall score above 3.500 (see [Appendix A2](#) and [Appendix C](#), section 7.2). The CRE in Basic Science Research stream applications will then be considered for funding in rank order, including any remaining applications which nominated for dementia-specific research funding consideration.

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

8.2. Who will approve grants?

In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC's CEO makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC. The Minister, acting on the advice of the CEO, determines expenditure from the MREA (subsection 51(2) of the NHMRC Act).

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. Advice of outcomes may occur before the approval of grants 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. This means that the information must not be made public until the embargo is lifted. During the embargo period, applicants must not publicise the information or post comments about their or the grant opportunity's grant outcomes in public domains such as social forums, websites, journals or newspapers.

The [NHMRC 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 Sapphire. 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 Sapphire.

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 grant activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant opportunity guidelines or letter of offer.

10.2. Obligations and approvals

NHMRC-funded grant activities must comply with applicable guidelines, laws and approval requirements. For further information see the [NHMRC website](#).

Institutions applying for NHMRC funding (both Administering and Participating Institutions) must also be aware of their obligations under the [National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse – Grant Connected Policy](#). Relevant institutions that have been named in an application for the Redress Scheme or named in the Royal Commission, and have not joined the Redress Scheme, will be ineligible to receive NHMRC funding.

Note: NHMRC-funded research with ethics and biosafety considerations must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies.

10.3. NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. Schedule(s) are accepted by the Administering Institution electronically in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found on the [NHMRC website](#). 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 executed in accordance with clause 2.3 of the Funding Agreement.

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. Under 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 the [NHMRC website](#).

10.4. NHMRC policies

Under 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 grant activity.

For further information see the [NHMRC 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 opportunity 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 opportunity guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC, in circumstances as set out in the Funding Agreement, including when there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of an alleged breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (including research misconduct, where this term is used).

10.7. Tax implications

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

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

10.8. Processes specific to CRE 2024

Additional administrative obligations and processes specific to CRE 2024 grantees are outlined in the following sections. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in these guidelines, the NHMRC Funding Agreement and on the [NHMRC website](#).

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 we monitor your grant activity

12.1. Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees are to report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the grant activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant opportunity guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant are to be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in Sapphire. For information on grant variations see the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Note that CIs are expected to remain on the grant for the full funding period and NHMRC will only approve changes to CIs in exceptional circumstances. Before a CIA applies for a grant variation, they and the relevant RAO will need to confirm that all CIs have agreed to the variation, noting the impact that it may have on their suite of grants and their eligibility to hold/apply for other grants. 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 the [NHMRC website](#) for details of format and timing.

12.2.2. Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each grant activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on the [NHMRC 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 before commencement of a new grant.

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

The Administering Institution is also required to provide NHMRC with any other report in respect of any research activity within the timeframe, in the format and containing the information requested by NHMRC. 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. Registration of clinical trials

Research involving clinical trials must be registered in the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) or equivalent before recruitment of the first participant. Information on how to register your clinical trial is available at www.anzctr.org.au. Cohort studies can be registered in the ANZCTR and successful grantees are encouraged to register their study with the registry, if applicable.

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

All recipients of NHMRC grants must comply with all elements of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* as a condition of funding. NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

13. Probity

13.1. Complaints process

Applicants or grantees can lodge a formal complaint about an NHMRC process related to funding via their Administering Institution's RAO and in writing to NHMRC Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au. Complaints must be lodged within 28 days of the relevant NHMRC decision or action. 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.

If applicants or grantees are dissatisfied with the response from the NHMRC Complaints Team, they can raise their concerns with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints. Note that the Commissioner of

Complaints does not undertake a merits review. Refer to NHMRC's Complaints Policy and the Commissioner of Complaints [webpage](#) for further information.

Applicants or grantees can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC and, where relevant, the Commissioner of Complaints.

13.2. Conflicts of Interest

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that interests of any kind are dealt with consistently, transparently and with rigour, in accordance with sections 16A and 16B of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (made under the subsection 29(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)).

Applicants are not required to declare actual or perceived interests.

To manage any conflicts of interest with applicants, NHMRC requires peer reviewers to declare interests, actual or perceived, and sign deeds of confidentiality. Peer reviewers declare any direct or indirect, pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest, which is reviewed by NHMRC, before being granted full access to an application. Any peer reviewer who is determined by NHMRC to have a 'high' conflict of interest will not be able to participate in the review of that application.

By managing any conflict, NHMRC maintains objectivity, impartiality and integrity in the assessment of applications. Further information about the conflict of interest process is available in the *Centres of Research Excellence 2024 Peer Review Guidelines*.

13.3. 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 need to familiarise themselves with the *NHMRC Privacy Policy* before providing personal information to NHMRC.

Information that is generally regarded as confidential information is application information and any other information 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 disclose personal and/or confidential 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
- 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 relevant 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.

In addition, NHMRC will provide certain limited personal information of the Chief Investigator/s included in an application to Administering Institutions for the purpose of certification of eligibility requirements.

13.4. 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 are to 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
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent	Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice given on the AIATSIS website (https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent ▪ identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and ▪ being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.
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.
Associate Investigator (AI)	An investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on outputs (e.g., publications).
Chief Investigator (CI)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Chief investigator A (CIA)	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)</i>	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date on which the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the grant is announced, whichever is later.

Term	Definition
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
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. It is available on the NHMRC website .
grant	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant activity	Defined as “Research Activity” in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant opportunity guidelines	All the documents published on GrantConnect under the grant opportunity. Also referred to as guidelines in this document.
grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	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.
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government’s whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at www.grants.gov.au</p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities (such as NHMRC) must publish grant opportunities on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant. For NHMRC’s purposes, grants are awarded to the Administering Institution for the benefit of the grant recipients (however described).

Term	Definition
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	A 'Special Account' established under section 49 of the NHMRC Act, through which Government appropriated funds are used to pay NHMRC grants.
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.
Probity Event	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
Sapphire	NHMRC's electronic, secure system that allows research administrators, applicants, assessors, grant holders and NHMRC staff to manage all aspects of the granting lifecycle.
Schedule	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and government's outcomes being achieved, and • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A. NHMRC structural priorities and Centres of Research Excellence 2024 priorities

A1 NHMRC structural priorities

Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to help achieve its broader goals.

Applications that meet structural priorities may be funded in order of merit, supplementary to applications within the budget for the grant opportunity, based on advice from NHMRC's Research Committee. NHMRC's current structural priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers
- Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

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. Accordingly, NHMRC is committed to allocating at least five per cent of the annual allocation from its Medical Research Endowment Account to research directed at improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 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.

Applicants identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent are asked to indicate this in their Sapphire profile.

Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice provided on the AIATSIS website (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality>). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely:

- being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and
- being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.

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

Gender equity – female and non-binary lead investigators

As the Australian Government's lead agency for funding health and medical research, NHMRC is committed to achieving gender equity in its grant program. Funding outcomes have highlighted the underrepresentation of female chief investigators across many of NHMRC's funding schemes. By providing structural priority funding for female lead investigators, NHMRC is seeking to give more outstanding female researchers the opportunity to receive funding and to encourage more to apply. Non-binary lead investigators are included in the gender equity structural priority to recognise that

non-binary people in the research workforce, like women, may have been affected by systemic disadvantage.²

A2 Centres of Research Excellence 2024 priority areas

In addition to these structural priorities, NHMRC may award CRE grants that address other defined priorities.

Dementia Research

Dementia research is a priority research area for NHMRC. More than 450,000 Australians are living with dementia and it is Australia's second leading cause of death. Innovative approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of dementia are essential for Australia's social and economic wellbeing.

As outlined in the [2019 Strategic Roadmap for Dementia Research and Translation](#), with innovations in modern neuroscience research it has become possible to explore the complexity of the brain more fully using novel, high precision approaches, such as gene editing, stem cell models and whole genome analysis. New imaging technologies and data capabilities are bringing further innovations to the field, revolutionising research in neurodegeneration. Despite this, discovering treatments for dementia requires a much deeper understanding of the biology of how dementia develops than currently available.

The CRE 2024 grant opportunity includes a funding allocation of \$3 million to support dementia research with a basic science research focus. This priority funding aims to encourage highly innovative basic science research and to retain, and continue to build, Australia's dementia research capacity following the Australian Government's \$200 million Boosting Dementia Research Initiative and other dementia-specific opportunities made available by NHMRC.

Applications will be eligible to be considered for this dementia-specific research funding if:

- the application is submitted to the CRE in Basic Science Research stream
- the applicant selects the relevant tick box within the Sapphire online application form declaring they wish to be considered for dementia-specific research funding (see [Appendix C](#), section 7.2)
- the proposed research advances the field of research in any of the recognised forms of dementia.

² Non-binary applicants and applicants who use a relevant term to describe their gender in the "I use a different term" free text field within their Sapphire profile will be included with female applicants for the purposes of structural priority funding.

Appendix B. Centres of Research Excellence 2024 Score Descriptors

The following descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria. Note that all criteria have equal weighting. Applications with an overall score equal to or below 3.500 are not fundable. Applications with an overall score above 3.500 are potentially fundable, subject to the availability of funds.

While the score 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 score descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. Peer reviewers will consistently refer to the score 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.

Criterion 1. Generate new knowledge that leads to a paradigm shift in understanding of a basic science outcome and/or a practice shift leading to improved health or health systems outcomes (20%)

- Clarity of research objectives and theoretical concepts
- Research design(s) and/or proposed methodology/ies are robust and appropriate to the broader strategy of the proposed Centre
- Aims and concepts of the research are innovative or pioneering
- Has the potential to generate significant new findings and advance knowledge in the field
- Feasibility of the proposed research

Score	Performance Indicator	Score Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has objectives that are well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed • is exemplary in design and state of the art in concept • is highly innovative throughout and introduces advances in concept • if successful, will have impact internationally and relevance across several fields • is highly feasible.
6	Outstanding	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has objectives that are clear and logical • is well-designed and conceptually sophisticated • is innovative and introduces some advances in concept • if successful will have impact internationally • is highly feasible.
5	Excellent	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has clear objectives • is well-designed, but with minor flaws • contains innovative ideas and minor advances in concept • if successful will have impact nationally • is feasible, but with some areas that are less certain.
4	Very Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has sound objectives • has satisfactory experimental design in general, but some areas that are weaker • has some innovative features • if successful will have impact nationally within a field • may be feasible but there are clear areas of concern.

3	Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has some sound objectives but others that are problematic • contains some study design problems or flaws • has relatively little novelty or innovation • if successful will advance knowledge incrementally • has parts that are feasible and others that are likely not.
2	Satisfactory	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has objectives which require further development • has major flaws in design and/or concepts • is derivative and lacking in innovation • if successful will lead to marginal advancement of knowledge • contains a research plan which is generally not feasible.
1	Weak or Limited	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has no clear objectives • is inappropriate in design and concepts • is unlikely to lead to any significant knowledge gain • lacks innovation or significance • raises major concerns about the feasibility of the research plan.

Forecast

Criterion 2. Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into knowledge gain, health policy and/or practice (20%)

- Significance and impact for human health and/or basic science
- Quality of the plan for research translation* and maximising impact, including interaction with commercial groups where appropriate
- Plans for promoting the Centre's activities to the wider community
- Involvement of consumers and the community in the planning, implementation and uptake of the research program e.g. priority-setting; design and development; governance; communication and/or implementation as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research

Score	Performance Indicator	Score Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses an issue of utmost importance to human health or to basic science with a high likelihood of impacting on 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 or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design • will lead to published research and other outputs that will be highly influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice • has exceptional involvement of consumers and the community in key project phases as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research.
6	Outstanding	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses an issue of major importance to human health or to basic science with significant potential to impact on human health • is highly likely to translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or fundamental changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design • will lead to published research and other outputs that should be very influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice • has extensive involvement of consumers and the community in key phases of the project as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research.
5	Excellent	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses an issue of considerable importance to human health or to basic science with the potential to impact on human health • is likely to translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or fundamental changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design • will lead to published research and other outputs influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice • has relatively extensive involvement of consumers and the community in key phases of the project as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research.

4	Very Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some importance to human health or to basic science with the potential to impact on human health has potential to translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or fundamental changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design will lead to published research and other outputs which may be influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice has some involvement of consumers and the community in key phases of the project as appropriate to the intended outcomes of the research.
3	Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of some concern to human health or to basic science with the theoretical potential to impact on human health has potential to translate into outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design will lead to published research or other outputs which may be influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice has some involvement of consumers and the community in the project.
2	Satisfactory	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses an issue of only marginal concern to human health or to basic science with the plausible but unclear potential to impact on human health is unlikely to translate into outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design will lead to published research or other outputs that are unlikely to be influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice has little involvement of consumers and the community.
1	Weak or Limited	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not address an issue of concern to human health or to basic science with any likely impact on human health will not translate into outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health, or changes in health policy or the next stage of research, new research or research re-design will lead to published research or other outputs that will not be influential in promoting change in research direction or health policy and/or practice has virtually no involvement of consumers and the community.

* NHMRC's [Research Translation Strategy 2022-2025](#) describes research translation as activities that use the results of research to inform, for example, the next stage of research, new research or research re-design, public policy, health-related systems and practice, or support the commercialisation of research discoveries, for the improvement of individual and population health. All types of research knowledge are valuable and can be translated (e.g. biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research).

The Research Translation Strategy acknowledges that translation is complex and is sometimes referred to as a 'translation pathway' from research through to implementation into policy and practice. Translation can occur at any stage and can follow many different pathways; strategies and activities may need to be modified repeatedly along this pathway. For Basic Science Research stream applications, in addition to informing next steps or new research, applications should address how the interface between the basic science and clinical practice, public health and/or health services is likely to lead to translational outcomes even if these are long term and not within scope for this grant.

Criterion 3. Develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with capability for independent research and future leadership roles (20%)

- Strategy to generate new researcher capability through training, mentoring and encouraging further career development
- Strategy to build workforce capacity and capability, including fostering the science of implementation where appropriate
- Clarity of opportunities for integrating new researchers into the teams

Score	Performance Indicator	Score Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes an exceptional strategy to generate new researcher capability, including clear pathways for career development and future leadership roles • includes an exceptional strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • will comprehensively integrate new researchers into teams with extensive mentoring and development opportunities.
6	Outstanding	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a strongly developed and well-articulated strategy to generate new researcher capability, including pathways for career development • includes a strongly developed and well-articulated strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • will integrate new researchers into teams with some mentoring and development opportunities.
5	Excellent	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a persuasive strategy to generate new researcher capability, including some pathways for career development • includes a persuasive strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • will integrate new researchers into teams with limited mentoring and development opportunities described.
4	Very Good	<p>The proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a sound strategy to generate new researcher capability, however pathways for career development are not well defined • includes a sound strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • should integrate new researchers into teams however mentoring and development opportunities are unclear.
3	Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a strategy that should generate new researcher capability, however pathways for career development are unclear • includes a strategy that should build workforce capacity and capability • includes few opportunities to integrate new researchers into teams.
2	Satisfactory	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a weak strategy to generate new researcher capability, and there are minimal career development options • includes a weak strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • has few viable opportunities to integrate new researchers into teams.
1	Weak or Limited	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not articulate a viable strategy to generate new researcher capability, or career development options • does not articulate a viable strategy to build workforce capacity and capability • has few, if any, opportunities to integrate new researchers into teams.

Criterion 4. Facilitate collaboration (20%)

Outline past and/or proposed collaborative arrangements within the Chief Investigator team and address how the team 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 fields of research
- integration and cohesiveness of the team
- roles and responsibilities within the team
- benefits of the proposed Centre beyond the sum of its individual components or previously funded Centre.

Score	Performance Indicator	Score Descriptors
7	Exceptional	The proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would be highly effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has very strong relationships with other researchers • has an exceptional degree of team integration and cohesiveness • clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities within the team for achieving the objectives of the project • clearly outlines the exceptional value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.
6	Outstanding	The proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would be highly effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has strong relationships with other researchers • has a very high degree of team integration and cohesiveness • articulates the roles and responsibilities within the team for achieving the objectives of the project • clearly outlines the significant value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.
5	Excellent	The proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would be effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has good relationships with other researchers • has a high degree of team integration and cohesiveness • articulates the roles and responsibilities for most of the team for achieving the objectives of the project • clearly outlines some value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.
4	Very Good	The proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would be reasonably effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has positive relationships with other researchers • has a good degree of team integration and cohesiveness • articulates the roles and responsibilities of some of the team for achieving the objectives of the project • outlines some value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.

3	Good	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would have some effectiveness in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has some viable relationships with other researchers, although weak • has some degree of team integration and cohesiveness • requires further clarification of the roles and responsibilities within the team for achieving the objectives of the project • requires further clarification on the value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.
2	Satisfactory	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be effective in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has little evidence of relationships with other researchers • has minimal team integration and cohesiveness • requires further clarification of the roles and responsibilities within the team for achieving the objectives of the project • does not persuasively describe the value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.
1	Weak or Limited	<p>The proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raises doubts about its effectiveness in promoting working collaborations and intellectual exchange • has no evidence of relationships with other researchers • has little or no evidence of team integration and cohesiveness • does not define the roles and responsibilities of team members for achieving the objectives of the project • does not describe the value-add to be gained from the proposed collaborative Centre.

Criterion 5. Record of research and translation achievement – relative to opportunity (20%)

- The previous research and/or translation experience of Chief Investigators (CIs) demonstrates that the team has the appropriate mix of research skills and experience to deliver the proposal.
- Record of achievement encompasses the national and international standing of the CIs based upon their research and/or translation achievements, relative to opportunity, including but not limited to:
 - research outputs, such as: most recent significant publications; publications that illustrate innovation and significance of past accomplishments; outcome and impact of previous research achievements including effects on health care practices or policy and knowledge uptake
 - contribution to field of research, such as: requests to lead discipline thinking through prestigious review invitations, keynote, plenary or named Lectureships; editorial appointments; leadership positions in scientific or professional societies; specialist and high level health policy committee appointments; commercial involvement
 - evidence of research translation, such as: influence on the next stage of research, new research or research re-design; public policy; health-related systems and practice; commercialisation of research discoveries.

Score	Performance Indicator	Score Descriptors
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity, the CI team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possess the optimal breadth of research skills and experience relevant for successful delivery of the proposal • are the most outstanding researchers in the country for their peers/cohort with a very strong record of research and translation outputs • have strong international reputations or are well on the way to developing them, and hold leadership positions in their field • are at the forefront of promoting knowledge translation in their field.
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity, the CI team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possess the breadth of research skills and experience relevant for successful delivery of the proposal • have a record of research outputs that places them in the top 10-20% of peers/cohort • have growing international reputations and established positions of leadership, or are emerging leaders, in their field • are highly recognised for their contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity, the CI team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a strong breadth of research skills and experience and any gaps relevant to the proposal are minor • have a record of research outputs that places them well above average for their peers/cohort • have strong national reputations and are emerging leaders in their field • are well recognised for their contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.
4	Very Good	Relative to opportunity, the CI team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have limited research skills and experience in some of the areas necessary for successful delivery of the proposal • have an above average record of research outputs • have existing or emerging national reputations • have made valued contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.

3	Good	<p>Relative to opportunity, the CI team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are deficient in some areas of expertise required for successful delivery of the proposal • have a moderate record of research outputs • have emerging national reputations • have made contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.
2	Satisfactory	<p>Relative to opportunity, the CI team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are underpowered in expertise relevant to the proposal • have a weak record of research outputs and have been less productive than might reasonably be expected • have emerging national reputations in a niche area • have made limited contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.
1	Weak or Limited	<p>Relative to opportunity, the CI team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are heavily underpowered in expertise relevant to the proposal • are not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields • have yet to establish national reputations • have not made contributions to promoting knowledge translation in their field.

Forecast

Appendix C. Centres of Research Excellence 2024 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) 2024 grant opportunity.

- Refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.
- CRE 2024 scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in Sapphire (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, refer to Section 7 'How to apply' in the grant opportunity guidelines.

2. Application Requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completed mandatory sections of 'My Profile' and 'My Profile' Requirements for CRE 2024 ([Appendix C, Section 6](#)).
- Completed application form ([Appendix C, Section 7](#))
- Grant Proposal as an attachment ([Appendix C, section 7.7](#))

Applications must comply with all requirements as set out in the grant opportunity guidelines. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements may result in non-acceptance or exclusion of your application (refer to Section 4 'Eligibility criteria' of the guidelines).

2.1 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grant Applications

Information provided to generative artificial intelligence (such as natural language processing models and artificial intelligence technology tools) becomes part of a public database and may be accessed by unspecified third parties.

If you use generative artificial intelligence to assist with the drafting of your application, you must ensure you are aware of the potential risks involved, such as those related to security, confidentiality, intellectual property, privacy, the accuracy of information generated and possible plagiarism.

3. Use of Gender-Neutral Language

The vision of the [NHMRC Gender Equity Strategy](#) is a gender diverse and inclusive health and medical research workforce to take advantage of the full range of talent needed to build a healthy Australia. Using gender-neutral language is one strategy to support this goal, serving to de-emphasise gender in the assessment of grant applications and reduce the potential impact of unconscious bias.

NHMRC strongly encourages the use of gender-neutral language in applications. This means that, wherever possible and appropriate, applicants should avoid the use of words that reveal their gender or the gender of team members. These words include (but are not limited to) her, him, she, he, Mr, Ms, Mrs and Miss, as well as first names and terms such as 'maternity leave'.

It is recognised that there will be instances where reference to the gender of applicants or team members is unavoidable or desirable.

However, wherever possible and relevant, applicants should:

- use the first person, i.e. I/me/my, rather than referring to themselves in the third person, or if third person is preferred, then use CI last-name or CIA
- use CIB, CIC, etc. or plural pronouns, i.e. their/they, when referring to others, rather than he/she or her/his
- use the format 'CI last-name', e.g. CI Jones, rather than using first names when referring to individuals
- use gender-neutral nouns, e.g. researcher, staff, etc., including when completing career disruption information, if relevant, e.g. parental leave, rather than maternity/paternity leave
- review the application for instances of 'masculine form by default' before submission and remove them, e.g., 'every team member will manage his data according to this protocol' can instead use the plural pronoun *their*.

Note: the aim is to de-emphasise **applicant** gender. Where gender is important for the research being proposed, it should be included in the application.

4. Minimum Data Requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information and are discouraged from making changes to this information after the minimum data due date. NHMRC uses this information to identify peer reviewers who are best suited to assess the application. Minimum data are indicated in Sapphire by a flag (🚩) and are comprised of:

- Administering Institution
- CRE stream
 - For CRE in Basic Science Research stream applications select 'Yes' to be considered for dementia-specific research funding if applicable to the proposed research.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health research focus (yes/no)
- Project synopsis
- Privacy agreement
- Research Classification:
 - Broad Research Area
 - Field(s) of Research
 - Peer Review Areas
 - Research Keywords
- Chief Investigator A (complete CIA Role and Name)

Minimum data must be entered into Sapphire by 15 November 2023. Applicants are to refer to section 7.3 'Minimum data requirements' of the guidelines for further information.

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 only require certification once complete and ready for submission to NHMRC.

5. Key Changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the CRE 2024 application form:

- Inclusion of information on using generative artificial intelligence to assist with the drafting of an application (see [Appendix C](#), section 2.1).
- Updated definitions for the 4 Broad Research Areas (BRAs) have been included in the Sapphire Application form (see [Appendix C](#), sections 6.3 and 7.4).

- Updated guidance for completing Fields of Research, Peer Review Areas and Research Keywords. Applicants will be required to enter percentages against each Field of Research (up to 3) totalling 100% (see [Appendix C](#), section 7.4).
- Funding is available in a CRE in Basic Science Research stream, including funding for dementia research with a basic science research focus (see [Appendix C](#), section 7.2 and 7.7).

6. 'My Profile' Requirements

Within your profile in Sapphire, there is mandatory information that must be provided and/or updated before an application is submitted (refer to Section 7 'How to apply' 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 Sapphire (*). This requirement applies to all Chief Investigators (CIs) named on the application. You will need to verify that each of the CIs has completed and/or updated their profile before an application is certified, noting that an error message will appear when a CI is added as a team member if they have not completed all mandatory fields in their profile. Existing NHMRC grant holders cannot commence or be named on an application until all mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete.

6.1 About My Profile

Provide your primary institution name under Primary Institution. If this is an Administering Institution, the RAO will have access to view your profile (including your gender). You may also allow the RAO to edit your profile.

Note: to update your Primary Institution name in Sapphire, go to 'Account Settings', 'Personal details' and click on 'Primary Institution'.

Personal Information

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

6.2 Academic Information

Indicate whether you have a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and, if applicable, the pass date (year) of your thesis (not the date of conferral).

6.3 Peer Review Information

Select a Broad Research Area that best aligns with your expertise.

Basic Science Research: seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use, but is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

Clinical Medicine and Science Research: seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

Health Services Research: seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

Public Health Research: seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

Accurate and up-to-date peer review information helps reduce peer review burden and ensures applications are allocated to the reviewers with the most relevant expertise. When completing this section, consider your relevant skills and expertise to review grant applications, rather than the field of your current research.

Select 5-10 Research Keywords most applicable to your main area of research. You can also provide further detail about your research interests or areas of expertise. This could include, but is not limited to, your research methodologies, areas of student supervision and areas in which you have published.

Select up to 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best describe your research interests, 1 being the most relevant and 3 being the least relevant.

You can add as many Fields of Research as required to describe your expertise. Indicate when you started your research in that field, the classification of the research (e.g. primary), and whether the research is current or terminated. Individuals are encouraged to list all relevant Fields of Research. Only current Fields of Research will be displayed.

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 about your personal research interests will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

6.4 Unavailability Calendar

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, include a statement detailing your reasons and the period for which you are unavailable. To maintain the list of available peer reviewers within Sapphire, NHMRC requests that all applicants update their availability routinely. This will avoid unnecessary contact if you are unavailable.

6.5 Contributions to NHMRC

Indicate the role you have contributed to NHMRC, if you have previously participated in an advisory, peer review, guideline development or other NHMRC activity requiring expert input via formal appointment.

Click '+' to start a new entry to specify the below:

Select a 'Contribution Role', from the drop-down menu

Indicate the year in which you held the Contribution Role.

Indicate the number of times you acted in that role in each year.

You will need to create a new entry for each type of contribution in a particular year.

6.6 'My Profile' Requirements Specific to CRE 2024

The following sections provide advice about parts of the application that are specific to CRE 2024. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, you are only required to complete the sections outlined below. If you enter more information than is required, only the required information will be imported into your application.

It is important that relevant 'My Profile' 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. 'My Profile' information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made to 'My

Profile' (for any CI) after Chief Investigator A (CIA) certification will not appear in the submitted application.

Instructions for entering 'My Profile' information in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

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

6.7 My Grants

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

NHMRC grants accepted by you are automatically pre-populated. However, you will need to verify this information and notify the help desk if there are any discrepancies.

6.8 Other Funding

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications.

Click '+' to start a new entry of any previous and/or current funding from sources other than NHMRC, including offers received for future funding. Provide as many details as you can in the spaces provided. Ensure that your role is clearly defined on each grant. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

6.9 Career Disruptions (within the last 10 years)

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly and recognises that some applicants will have had career disruptions that need to 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.

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 the [NHMRC website](#).

Career Disruption claims will not be considered for applications that fail to comply with the following requirements:

The last 10 years of Career Disruptions will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Disruption Type

To enter a Career Disruption, click '+'. Select a 'Disruption type' from the drop-down menu.

Impact

Provide a brief explanation of the impact the Career Disruption(s) has had on your research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to your career stage. Include the percentage (%) full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Career Disruption. Do not describe the nature of the Career Disruption in this field.

Note that the information in this field will be provided to peer reviewers.

Additional Research Outputs

Provide details of outputs other than publications that you would like to claim in relation to this Career Disruption.

Dates

Nominate the periods when you have had a disruption (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

6.10 Relative to Opportunity (within the last 10 years)

If applicable, you can use this section to provide details of any Relative to Opportunity considerations and the effect they have had on your research and research achievements, including (but not limited to) interruptions due to calamities, e.g. bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last 10 years of Relative to Opportunity information will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Circumstances

Provide a brief explanation of the type of Relative to Opportunity circumstance.

Impact

Provide a brief explanation of the impact this has had on your research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to your career stage.

Date

Nominate the periods when you have had a Relative to Opportunity circumstance (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

6.11 Publications

This section is for internal purposes and will not be provided to peer reviewers when assessing applications. Only the top 10 publications over the last 10 years as provided by Chief Investigators in the application form will be used for peer review purposes. It is, however, recommended that applicants continue to update their list of publications in this section as these data are used by NHMRC for peer review assignment and internal reporting and evaluation purposes.

Publication information can be entered into Sapphire manually or by data import. Supported formats are ORCID import, EndNote® Library import, and RIS import via .xml file.

Further details on how to upload publications are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#). Applicants are advised to check and manually edit data imports as required. To manually create a new entry, click the '+' button.

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

A preprint is a complete and public draft of a scientific document, yet to be certified by a journal through peer review. To be considered in this category, a preprint:

- must be available in a recognised scientific public archive or repository such as arXiv, bioRxiv, Peer J Preprints, medRxiv
- should be uniquely identifiable via a digital object identifier (DOI); for preprints that are incrementally updated as work progresses, each version should have a unique DOI and only the latest version of the work should be included in the grant application.

If the work contained in a preprint is subsequently published in a peer reviewed journal, this should be updated in the publication list in Sapphire to avoid double reporting of outputs (recognising that, upon publication, many authors retain an Open Access 'post-print' or archive copy of their work in order to preserve and make available the intellectual content of their work).

7. Application Form Requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to the CRE 2024 grant opportunity and must be completed as part of your application. Step-by-step instructions for entering application details in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

7.1 Creating an Application

Click '+ New Application' to create an application.

Grant Opportunity

Select the grant round you wish to apply for, e.g. 2024 Centres of Research Excellence.

Application Title

The application title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and needs to accurately describe the nature of the research proposal.

7.2 Application Details

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements.

Application Identification Number (APP ID)

Each application will have its own unique Application Identification Number (Application ID), which is automatically generated by Sapphire and pre-filled in the application. Use this Application ID number (e.g. 2345678) to identify your application when referring to it in any correspondence.

Administering Institution

Select your Administering Institution by entering three characters to start searching. 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.

Stream

Select the CRE stream that best fits the Broad Research Area of your research proposal; refer to Section 2 'About the grant program' of the guidelines for stream definitions.

If your CRE in Basic Science Research stream application focuses on any of the recognised forms of dementia research select 'Yes' to be considered for *dementia-specific research funding* (see [Appendix A2](#) for further information).

Grant Duration

This section may contain pre-filled information that cannot be edited. If not, select the requested duration of your grant (in years) with reference to any limits specified in the grant opportunity guidelines.

For a CRE 2024 application, select 5 years.

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*.

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 the application form. Your application may be assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*, using information you provide in the following text boxes: 'Community Engagement', 'Benefit', 'Sustainability and Transferability' and 'Building Capability'.

This information will be provided to peer reviewers if your application is confirmed by an assessor with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as meeting the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

Project Synopsis

The synopsis should accurately, and briefly, summarise the research proposal. This information may be used to assign applications to peer reviewers. It may also be considered in the peer review process.

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.

Privacy Agreement

NHMRC, as an agency subject to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), is required to notify you about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. We do so by referring you to the NHMRC Privacy Policy ([NHMRC Privacy Policy](#)). Ensure that you have carefully read and understood the Privacy Policy before completing the application. If you require further clarification, contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer via email (NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au) or letter (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601).

Have you read and understood the NHMRC Privacy Policy?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

In addition, and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 8 in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), we seek your consent to send your personal information (consisting of an "Assessor Snapshot Report") overseas, for the purposes of peer-review of this application if required. NHMRC uses the expertise of some peer assessors who reside overseas. While we make every effort to protect your personal information, assessors outside Australia are bound by their own country's laws and consequently we cannot provide assurance that your information will be handled in accordance with the same standards as required by the Privacy Act 1988, or that you would have similar remedies if your personal information is released in breach of local privacy laws.

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

Partner organisation consent

Do you give consent to provide your application and assessment results to other partner organisations?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

If you wish to be considered for funding by a partner organisation, select 'Yes'. By selecting 'Yes' you are consenting to NHMRC providing your application and/or assessment information to potential funding partners if your application fits the funding partner's research funding objectives. For a list of funding partners, refer to this grant opportunity's information on [GrantConnect](#).

7.3 Participating Institutions

In some cases, the institution that will administer your application may differ from the institution in which you will actually conduct the proposed research or your proposed research may be conducted at a collaborating institution in addition to your administering institution. For example, many universities administer research that will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. Information on

'Participating Institutions' is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application and for grant administration purposes.

Research Institution

List the Participating Institution and department where the proposed research will be conducted.

To add more than one Participating Institution, press '+' and complete the required information. If the Participating Institution does not appear in the list, email the institution name to the Research Help Centre (help@nhmrc.gov.au).

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%.

Note: If some or all of the proposed research will be carried out at your Administering Institution, create an entry with the Administering Institution and choose a percentage up to 100%. At least one institution must be listed.

7.4 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 reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile.

Definitions for the 4 Broad Research Areas (BRAs) have been added to the application form in Sapphire to assist applicants in selecting the most appropriate BRA. These definitions will appear as help text (?) under Research Classification in the application.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) 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:

Broad Research Area:

Select a Broad Research Area that best describes the research outlined in your grant proposal. For example, research in the very early stages of developing a vaccine against a parasite should be categorised as basic science research instead of public health research.

Basic Science Research: seeks to understand the biological processes that underpin health and disease at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole body levels. It may be conducted in vitro, in vivo and/or in silico. It may use but, is not limited to, cells, tissues or other materials of human origin or from relevant animal models.

Clinical Medicine and Science Research: seeks to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases and conditions. It may involve interaction with patients and/or the use of clinical diagnostic materials or patient data.

Health Services Research: seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness, quality, safety, social and environmental dimensions of health care including access, distribution, timeliness and efficiency.

Public Health Research: seeks to improve the health of a population through the prevention of disease, prolongation of life and promotion of health and wellbeing. It includes research to understand the social, behavioural, environmental and other determinants of health and disease.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) 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:

Field(s) of Research:

Click '+' to add rows for each Field of Research (FoR) that best describes the area of research of the application. The choice of FoRs and their proportions will assist in assigning appropriate assessors to the application.

- Select up to 3 Fields of Research that best reflect the nature of the research in the application.
- Allocate a percentage (%) against each FoR.
- Ensure the total percentage (%) equals 100%.

Peer Review Areas:

Select up to 3 Peer Review Areas (PRAs) that best reflect the application's areas of research. PRAs must not be duplicated.

Research Keywords:

Select up to 5 Research Keywords that are most applicable to the application's main area of research.

Burden of Disease:

Select up to 3 Burden of Disease types that best describe the area of research of the application.

- Click '+' to add rows for each additional Burden of Disease.
- You must allocate a percentage (%) of time against each.
- The percentage (%) total must not exceed 100%.

7.5 Research Team

You can include a maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIs) and 10 Associate Investigators (AIs) in your research team. For further information of the eligibility requirements for CIs and AIs, refer to Section 4 'Eligibility criteria' of the guidelines.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. List all members of the Research Team, including CIs and AIs. Complete a separate entry for each member of the team by clicking '+' to add rows.

All CIs/AIs must have a Sapphire account in order to be listed as part of the Research Team. CIs/AIs who cannot be located using the search function will need to complete registration.

Note: Click 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' to invite a Chief/Associate Investigator to complete Sapphire Registration and/or share your application with view or edit access. Enter the email address, select the corresponding access option from the drop-down menu and click 'Save and send'. Users will receive an email invitation to be assigned to the application with appropriate access rights. Click '+ Add another user' to invite any additional Investigators.

Ensure that you have the correct email addresses for your colleagues before commencing your application.

Chief Investigators (CIA-CIJ)

The 'Role' and corresponding 'Name' fields for Chief Investigator A must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. If you are naming yourself for a CI/AI role, 'Invitation Response' status will automatically change to Accepted.

Indicate whether the Chief Investigator A will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant and outline their background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal.

Click '+' to add rows for additional CIs. Click the 'Role' drop-down menu to select a role for the CI.

To add a CI to your research team, enter their email address. Outline the background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal for each additional Chief Investigator.

If you add a CI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their

name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by CIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added CIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

Associate Investigators (AIs)

Click '+' to Add Rows for AIs. To add an AI to your research team, enter their email address.

'Position' is optional. 'Relevant background and expertise' is optional.

If you add an AI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by AIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added AIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

Publications

Applicants are required to nominate up to 10 of their best publications from the past 10 years (taking into account any career disruptions) immediately prior to the scheme close date. You are to provide an explanation for each publication entry. Each explanation should explain why the publication has been selected, including its quality and contribution to science, and your contribution to the publication.

You may include field weighted metrics and citation metrics within the explanation field for the 10 best publications from the last 10 years. Where possible, references to publications within the provided entry fields should be provided as a complete citation. Where this is not possible, include sufficient citation information to locate the publication such as authors, publication title, journal name, year and digital object identifier.

Publications will be assessed against the score descriptors at [Appendix B](#).

Top 10 in 10

Provide the details of (up to) 10 of your best publications in the last 10 years.

Each publication should be provided separately, i.e. one publication per free-text field.

The explanation should outline why the publication was nominated, its quality and contribution to science, and your contribution to the publication:

- Publication 1 - 10 (max. 200 characters for citation)
- Explanation (max. 2000 characters).

7.6 Ethics

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](#).

7.7 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>). Applicants are asked not to use URL shorteners as this may create a security risk.

- Publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, consistent with the recommendations in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. If included, these metrics will be disregarded by peer reviewers when assessing an application.

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 Sapphire.

Grant Proposal (Upload)

To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the 'Upload New' button followed by the 'Choose File' button. Select the PDF file you wish to upload and then click 'Start upload' to upload your Grant Proposal. Click 'Save' to ensure the application is submitted correctly.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to 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 Sapphire.

Naming and formatting requirements for the grant proposal, to ensure fairness and consistency across applicants, 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 need to 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 2 MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named using the following: Applicant's Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf E.g.: Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Header	Application ID and Applicant surname 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.
Margins	Pages must have 2 cm top, bottom, left and right margins.
Line spacing	Single
Language	English

Table 2: Grant Proposal Components

Component	Page Limit
Cover Page	1 page
Response to Assessment Criteria	20 pages
Chief Investigator Track Record	1 page per CI
Consumer and Community Participation, if applicable	1 page
References	2 pages

A brief description of each component is provided below.

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

Cover Page – 1 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 surname.

Response to Assessment Criteria – 20 Pages

Address the assessment criteria as specified in Section 6 ‘The assessment criteria’ of the guidelines, noting each assessment criteria is weighted equally.

Irrelevant information should not be included. 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
- strategies for risk management.

Guidance on addressing consumer and community involvement

NHMRC understands and values the importance of meaningful engagement with consumers and community members in all phases of research from priority setting through to implementation. Applicants are encouraged to use the suite of resources available on [NHMRC's website](#), and outline the strategies that will be employed to effectively engage with consumers and community members throughout the research project. Where language barriers or additional complexities surrounding community engagement and participation may affect the project, applicants should consider how these will be addressed and include contingencies where appropriate.

Guidance on addressing research translation

[NHMRC's Research Translation Strategy 2022-2025](#) outlines the following principles:

- Access to research outcomes drives stronger public policy, stronger health-related systems and a stronger knowledge economy.
- Research is embedded in the system when researchers and end-users work together to identify research priorities, design and conduct high-quality research and implement outcomes.
- To translate research into improved health outcomes, those responsible for research translation need the requisite knowledge and skills.

In support of the above principles, the CRE 2024 grant opportunity provides funding to encourage and build capacity and capability in research translation in all BRAs. Providing funding opportunities in all BRAs, aligned with the intended outcomes of the CRE scheme, will foster collaboration and networks across the research translation 'pathway' – benefitting cross-disciplinary collaborations, breaking down research silos, improving end-to-end research and avoiding research duplication and gaps.

CRE in Basic Science Research stream applications, in addition to informing next steps or new research, should address how the interface between the basic science and clinical practice, public health and/or health services is likely to lead to translational outcomes even if these are long term and not within scope for this grant.

The following excerpt from [NHMRC's Research Translation Strategy 2022-2025](#) provides guidance on research translation for the CRE scheme.

What is research translation?

The creation of knowledge does not, of itself, lead to widespread implementation of that research and improvements to health. The knowledge must be translated for the benefits to flow and have impact.

At NHMRC, research translation is fundamentally about activities that use the results of research to inform, for example, the next stage of research, new research or research re-design, public policy, health-related systems and practice, or support the commercialisation of research discoveries, for the improvement of individual and population health. All types of research knowledge are valuable and can be translated (e.g. biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research).

Translation is complex and is sometimes referred to as a 'translation pathway' from research through to implementation into policy and practice. Translation can occur at any stage and can be complex; strategies and activities may need to be modified repeatedly along this pathway.

A range of activities contribute to research translation, for example, the synthesis of evidence, development of evidence-based guidelines, and the identification, testing and introduction of systems, practices, policies and devices (as well as elimination or disinvestment in those that are not effective).

Guidance on addressing collaboration and capacity building

In order to demonstrate that the grant proposal will develop the health and medical research workforce, the following could be addressed:

- the need for increased capacity in the workforce of the research field(s) of the grant proposal

- the diversity of research capacity building activities aimed at upskilling and developing leadership potential in researchers from different career stage, discipline, sector, roles and responsibilities
- communication strategies across the Centre that will promote diverse mentoring, coaching and sharing of expertise
- networking opportunities with partners and stakeholders if applicable
- mechanisms for reward and recognition of talented developing researchers.

In order to demonstrate that the grant proposal will facilitate collaboration, the following could be addressed:

- the governance of the project including management, coordination and integration of activities into the project as a whole
- the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team, including time commitment, for achieving the objectives of the project
- project management and communication strategies
- data storage requirements, data sharing, digital solutions
- engagement with partners and stakeholders if applicable.

Guidance on addressing research impact

Applicants are encouraged to consider the breadth of research impact that can be assessed under the record of research and translation achievement. NHMRC defines the impact of research as the demonstrable benefit that research makes to knowledge, health, the economy and/or society. Impact is the effect of the research after it has been adopted, adapted for use, or used to inform further research. Research impact is the verifiable outcomes from research and not the prospective or anticipated effects of the research. Research impact also includes research that leads to a decision not to use a particular diagnostic, treatment or health policy.

Chief Investigator Track Record – 1 page per CI

Overall track record in the last five years

Applicants should use this section to identify aspects of their track record that are in addition to their top 10 publications from the last 10 years. This includes relative to opportunity considerations.

The following areas may be relevant:

- 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 knowledge, health, economic and/or societal outcomes as outlined in the NHMRC definition of research impact above
- patents – this information should include if the patent has been licensed, when it has been licensed, to whom it has 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 keynote, plenary or named Lectureships, international committees and societies
- supervision and mentoring
- peer review involvement (including NHMRC, other granting organisations, manuscripts, editorial responsibilities)
- any other information the applicant thinks is vital to the application.

Note: In accordance with [Appendix C](#) Section 3, photos of the CI team should not be included in the application.

Note: Peer reviewers will use this information along with the top 10 publications from the last 10 years (see [Appendix C](#) section 7.5) as an indicator of the productivity of the research team.

Note: Applicants should specify the time period in which track record activities occurred. This must not extend prior to 2018 unless there are relevant career disruptions.

Note: The impact of career disruptions from the last five years will be considered by peer reviewers for CIs' overall track record in the last five years. The impact of career disruptions from the last 10 years will be considered by peer reviewers for CIs' top 10 publications in the last 10 years.

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 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 [NHMRC's website](#).

References – 2 pages

References for the Research Proposal must:

- not exceed 2 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 work cited in the Research Proposal
- be written in English.

7.8 Third Party Research Facilities

Applicants often need to receive services from research facilities to undertake their research.

Such facilities include but are not limited to: biospecimens and associated data from biobanks or pathology services, non-human primate colonies, the Australian Twin Registry, Cell Bank Australia, and the Trans-Tasman Radio Oncology Group and other organisations that provide clinical trials services.

Applicants will need to consult with research facilities to ensure that the services they require can be provided. Letters from research facilities confirming their collaboration must be submitted with the application.

Indicate whether you will be using services provided by a research facility to complete your research. If you select 'yes', then upload your letter from the research facility confirming their collaboration.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document's name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

8. Certifying Your Application

Once all 'My Profile' details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in Sapphire. Certification is required by both the CIA and Administering Institution. Refer to section 7.7 'Certification and submission' 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.
- 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.
- A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at [Appendix C](#) Section 9.
- 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 'Certification and submission' 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 'My Profile'. Any subsequent changes to these areas of Sapphire will not appear in 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.
- Note that your personal information may be provided to another Administering Institution for the purpose of certifying the application where a researcher is either currently receiving NHMRC funding or is on a different and separate application for NHMRC funding.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

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

9. Checklist for Applicants

Before creating an application:

- Ensure Sapphire Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete (indicated by a red asterisk *).
- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines and [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).
- Check closing date and time for application lodgement.
- Update your Sapphire 'My Profile' 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 for your application, including addressing any additional assessment criteria.
- Make sure all required attachments are uploaded.

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 the principles and responsibilities 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 occur before the closing 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.