Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

NHMRC

Development Grants 2020 Guidelines

Opening date:	23 October 2019
Closing date and time:	17.00 AEDT on 11 December 2019
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Commonwealth co-sponsoring entity:	Australian Government Department of Health
Administering entity:	NHMRC
Enquiries:	Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice: Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers) Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13:00 AEDT on 11 December 2019. Note: NHMRC's Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within two working days. This timeframe may be delayed during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.
Date guidelines released:	25 September 2019
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

Contents

1 Development Grants 2020 processes

NHMRC's Development Grant scheme is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

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

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The grant opportunity opens

NHMRC publishes the grant guidelines on GrantConnect

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Applicants complete and submit a grant application

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

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Applications verified and assessed

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

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Grant decisions are made

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

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NHMRC notifies applicants of the outcome

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

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Delivery of grant

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

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Evaluation of the Development Grant scheme

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

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Development Grant 2020 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

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

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

The Development Grant 2020 grant opportunity will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the Department of Finance website.

1.1.1 About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and integrity of, health and medical research. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) and the CGRGs.

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

2 About the grant program

The objectives of the Development Grant scheme are:

- to increase, facilitate and expedite the translation of health and medical research outcomes through to commercialisation, within a foreseeable timeframe.
- to support proof-of-concept research with a feasible commercialisation pathway and a high likelihood of producing protected IP.
- to provide a potential mechanism through which research outcomes can be progressed to a stage that makes them competitive to receive industry investment through other government schemes or from the private sector.
- to encourage collaboration between health research, the private sector and industry (domestic and international).

The intended outcomes of the Development Grant scheme are: increased rates of translation of health and medical research into commercial outcomes, resulting in improved health and medical knowledge.

2.1 Key changes

Applicants should note the following changes for the Development Grants 2020:

- References to RGMS removed.
- Updated section 7.1 Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes.
- Removed references to discussion by peer reviewers in section 8.1.2.

2.2 NHMRC structural priorities, Development Grants 2020 priorities and funding with other organisations

NHMRC's Corporate Plan outlines strategic priorities and major health issues for the period covered by the Plan, including how NHMRC will address these issues, and a national strategy for medical research and public health research. Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to deliver against its strategic priorities.

Information on NHMRC's structural priorities, Development Grants 2020 priorities and Development Grants 2020 funding with other organisations is outlined in Appendix A.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the Development Grants 2020 is estimated to be $15 million. NHMRC's Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes.

The amount of funding for a Development Grant will be based on assessment of the requested budget. Applications must clearly justify the requested duration and budget and how they will support the proposed outcomes of the research. Peer Reviewers will consider this information and may reduce the duration and/or budget to ensure the research aims and objectives can be achieved while ensuring value with money. A reduced budget does not reduce the scope of the proposed research activity.

3.2 Grant period

A Development Grant can be requested for between 1 and 3 years depending on the proposal.

4 Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions is available on NHMRC's website.

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

An eligibility ruling may be made by NHMRC at any stage following the close of applications, including during peer review. Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information in order to assess whether the eligibility requirement has been met.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities or other NHMRC funding schemes will

not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity.

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

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

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

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

4.1.1 Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators

The maximum number of CIs allowed on a Development Grant application is 10.

Chief Investigator 'A'

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia or have an appropriate work visa in place. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period.

Chief Investigators

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. CIs are expected to remain active on the Research Activity as outlined in the application for the duration of the grant.

Associate Investigators

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

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

4.2 Multiple applications/grants

The number of NHMRC Development Grants that a CI may concurrently hold and/or apply for is not limited, and does not impact any other grants that may be applied for, including Development Grants.

4.3 Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in the Grant Guidelines
- it, or any CI named on the application, contravenes an applicable law or code
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), and
- any CI named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or Delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect consequential action

taken by NHMRC in response to a finding of research misconduct or a breach of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the *NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding* available from NHMRC's website.

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

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

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities and expenditure

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

5.1.1 Salary support

If applicants are seeking CI salaries, justification on how the proposed budget is directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research must be provided and will be considered during peer review.

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

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

Individuals cannot draw a salary from any Development Grants if they are a named Associate Investigator.

5.2 Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

The CIA may request funding to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas. 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.

In some instances, the CIA may seek to conduct the majority of the work overseas. However, it is important that the CIA ensures such research is well justified and conforms with the scheme eligibility requirements. For example, the CIA is required to be based in Australia for at least 80% of the requested grant duration. Funding (including salaries) for research support staff based overseas can be considered where this is important to achieving the aims of the research.

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

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

The Development Grant scheme will not fund early stage research or knowledge creation research. NHMRC advises applicants to consider directing such research proposals to the Ideas Grant scheme.

Applications with a significant clinical trial component, as determined by the NHMRC, are ineligible for Development Grant funding. Applicants are advised to consider applying to the Clinical Trials or Cohort Studies Grant scheme.

The Development Grant scheme will not fund research beyond the proof-of-concept stage. Applicants whose research is beyond the proof-of-concept stage are advised to seek support from the private sector or other government agencies.

5.4 Duplicate funding

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

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

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

6 The assessment criteria

Applications for Development Grants 2020 are assessed by peers against the assessment criteria listed below and the category descriptors at Appendix B.

- Scientific Merit of the Proposal (fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) – 40%
- Record of Commercial Achievements – 20%
- Commercial Potential – 40%.

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

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

6.1 Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

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

- *NHMRC Roadmap 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research*
- *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders*, and
- *Keeping Research on Track II* (a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* can be put into practice in research).

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

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

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

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

7 How to apply

7.1 Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

23 October 2019	Applications open in NHMRC's granting system
17:00 AEDT **20 November 2019**	Minimum data due in NHMRC's granting system
17:00 AEDT **11 December 2019**	Applications close in NHMRC's granting system
Feb - Apr 2020	Anticipated peer review period
August 2020*	Anticipated notification of outcomes

*Date is indicative and subject to change.

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

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

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

Late applications will not be accepted.

7.2 Application Extensions

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

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or hurricanes, or
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family[1], is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

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

[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).

7.3 Minimum data requirements

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

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

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

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

7.4 Application requirements

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. Further information on what can and cannot be included in the application is provided in the Guide to Applicants at Appendix D.

All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

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

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

7.5 Attachments to the application

NHMRC requires the following documents with your application:

- Grant Proposal, consisting of
  - Research Proposal
  - References
  - Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, if applicable
  - Commercialisation Business Case
  - Chief Investigators' Research Achievements
  - Chief Investigators' Commercialisation Achievements

A detailed and feasible Commercialisation Business Case that takes into account the regulatory pathway, protectable IP, commercial barriers and potential pathways to market, must support the application. Applicants must provide a business case for the commercialisation of their proposed research that addresses the following headings:

- Commercialisation work plan
- Market analysis
- IP management.

There is no requirement for the Administering Institution to own the IP, but the proposal should demonstrate that the IP arrangements are consistent with the scheme objectives (see section 2.1) and assessment criteria (see section 6).

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

7.6 Consumer and community participation

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

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

7.7 Certification and submission

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

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

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

7.7.1 CIA certification

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

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

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

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time of award. Conditions may change during the course of the

grant, for example, reporting obligations may change. CIs will need to meet new/changed conditions.

- The reported outcomes of the research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.
- Grant offers may be withdrawn and action taken over the life of the grant, if eligibility criteria to accept and/or continue holding a grant are not met.

7.7.2 Administering Institution certification

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

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- Where the CIA is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, they will have the requisite work visa in place at the time of accepting the successful grant and will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the Funding Period.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the Funding Period.
- Approval of the Research Activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.
- Written evidence of consent has been obtained from all CIs and AIs and provided to the RAO.

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

7.8 Retracted publications

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

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

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

7.9 Withdrawal of applications

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

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

7.10 Questions during the application process

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

NHMRC's Research Help Centre

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

E: help@nhmrc.gov.au.

Refer to the Research Help Centre webpage for opening hours.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

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

8.1.1 Who will assess applications?

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

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

8.1.2 Development Grants 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 assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see Section 6). The overall scores from assessments will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is 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.

9 Notification of application outcomes

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

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

10 Successful grant applications

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

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

10.1 Information required from grantees

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

10.2 Approvals and licences

Where relevant, particularly in relation to ethics and biosafety, NHMRC-funded Research Activities must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies. For further information see NHMRC's website.

10.3 NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these Grant Guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the

Administering Institution. In accepting the Schedules, the Administering Institution is agreeing to the conditions contained in the Funding Agreement and the Schedule.

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

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

10.3.1 Responsible and ethical conduct of research

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Administering Institutions and CIAs are bound by the conditions of the Funding Agreement. NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Further information about the Code can be found on NHMRC's website.

10.4 NHMRC policies

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

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

10.5 Payments

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

10.6 Suspension of grants

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

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

10.7 Tax implications

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

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

11 Announcement of grants

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

12 How NHMRC monitors grant activity

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees should report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the Research Activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant should be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in NHMRC's granting system. For information on grant variations see NHMRC's *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the NHMRC website.

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

12.1 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.

12.1.1 Financial reports

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

12.1.2 Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each Research Activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on NHMRC's website. While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met prior to acceptance of a new grant.

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

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

12.1.3 NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

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

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

12.2 Evaluation of the Development Grant 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.

12.3 Open Access Policy

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

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

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

13 Probity

13.1 Complaints process

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

Each complaint is to be directed to the Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision. Refer to NHMRC's Complaints Policy and the Commissioner of Complaints webpage for further information.

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

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

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

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

NHMRC may reveal confidential information to:

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

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

13.3 Freedom of information

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

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

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the announcement of the grant, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
final year	The final 12 calendar months of a grant.
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the NHMRC Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.
grant	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: • under which relevant money, or other consolidated revenue funds, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth • which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals • which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the schedule to the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

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

Term	Definition
Probity Event	Any event or occurrence which: • has a material adverse effect on the integrity, character or honesty of the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity; or • relates to the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity and has a material adverse effect on the public interest or public confidence in the Administering Institution, Participating Institution or Research Activity.
Schedule	The contract template used by NHMRC to form part of the Funding Agreement. The schedule sets out the research activity and is signed by NHMRC and the CIA's Administering Institution.
value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a term used in the CGRGs and is a judgement that the grant proposal represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations. When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to: • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee's and government's outcomes being achieved • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A. NHMRC structural priorities and funding organisations

A1 NHMRC key structural priorities

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

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health research and researchers

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

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

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

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

Health Services Research

Increasing the number of health services research grants is a strategic priority. Of the total 1035 competitive grants awarded in 2018, only 7.3% of these grants were for Health Services Research, which is significantly lower than Basic Science at 46.9%, Clinical Medicine and Science at 29.0% and Public Health at 16.8%.

Gender Equality

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

Appendix B. Development Grants 2020 Category Descriptors

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
7 Outstanding by International Standards	The research plan: ▪ is well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed ▪ will successfully achieve proof-of-concept ▪ is a near flawless design ▪ is without question highly feasible and thus almost certain to be successfully completed ▪ is consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ has, overall, an outstanding record of research achievements in the field of the proposed research ▪ brings together all of the expertise needed for success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has proven successful national and international involvement ▪ in commercialisation of research including for example, granted patents, industry consultation, licensing of IP ▪ has had direct involvement in industry placements and/or involvement with establishing spin off companies ▪ has a record of commercial achievements which is outstanding by international standards ▪ is highly likely to achieve a very significant commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is extremely large ▪ provides a clear description of a highly feasible commercial/development pathway should the product, process or technology prove successful ▪ will be conducted in an environment with excellent institutional commercial advice and development support structures such as a commercialisation office or equivalent, which will increase the likelihood of arriving at a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe ▪ clearly outlines how the proposed research meets the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ is unique or provides an internationally competitive edge ▪ is linked to a very strong IP position. Funding the project: ▪ would significantly increase the probability of successful commercialisation, usually by adding substantial value to the concept and/or supporting a critical proof of concept and/or creation of a commercialisable prototype that will enrich the Australian life sciences industry sector and bring economic benefit to Australia.

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
6 Excellent	The research plan: ▪ is clearly defined, coherent and well developed ▪ is very well designed ▪ is feasible and highly likely to be successfully completed ▪ will successfully achieve proof-of-concept ▪ is consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ the leader has an excellent record of research achievements, as do, on average, the other team members in the field of the proposed research ▪ brings together all of the expertise needed for success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has significant experience in national and international commercialisation of research including approved patents, industry consultation, licensing of IP, and has had direct involvement with industry ▪ has a record of commercial achievements which is of a high international standard ▪ is very likely to achieve a significant commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is very large ▪ provides a clear description of a feasible commercial/development pathway should the product, process or technology prove to be successful ▪ will be conducted in an environment with strong institutional commercial advice and development support structures, including an institutional commercialisation office or equivalent which will support the likelihood of arriving at a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe ▪ clearly outlines how the proposed research meets all the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ is internationally competitive and likely to be attractive to a commercial partner ▪ could be linked to a strong IP position. Funding the project: ▪ would increase the probability of successful commercialisation, usually by adding substantial value to the concept and/or supporting a critical proof of concept and/or creation of a commercialisable prototype that will bring economic benefit to Australia.

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
5 Very Good	The research plan: ▪ is generally clear in its scientific plan and is logical ▪ raises only a few minor concerns with respect to the study design ▪ will likely be successfully completed and achieve proof-of-concept ▪ is consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ members on average, have good record of research achievements in the field of the proposed research ▪ possesses most of the expertise needed for success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has been involved in national commercialisation of research including approved patents, industry consultation, licensing of intellectual property, and has had involvement in industry ▪ has a record of commercial achievements which is of a high or growing national standard ▪ has the ability to promote a strong commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is large ▪ provides an outline of a feasible commercial development pathway should the product, process or technology prove to be successful ▪ will be conducted in an environment with good access to institutional commercial development advice and support structures which will mostly likely support the likelihood of arriving at a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe ▪ adequately outlines how the proposed research meets the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ has significant commercial potential nationally and potentially, internationally ▪ could be linked to a strong or strongly developing IP position. ▪ Funding the project: ▪ would most likely bring economic benefit to Australia.

	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
Category	**Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%**	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
4 Good	The research plan: ▪ is good in terms of its objectives ▪ contains several areas of weakness in the experimental design and feasibility ▪ raises several concerns about successful completion ▪ may successfully achieve proof-of-concept ▪ is consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ members on average, have good record of research achievements in the field of the proposed research ▪ possesses much of the expertise needed for success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has a solid record of national research commercialisation achievement including approved patents, industry consultation and licensing of IP ▪ has a record of commercial achievements which is of a good national standard ▪ has some potential to promote a viable commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is moderate. ▪ provides an outline of a commercialisation pathway which could be better developed and raised only a few minor concerns. ▪ will be conducted in an environment with access to commercial development advice and support structures, which could support the likelihood of arriving at a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe ▪ outlines how the proposed research meets the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ has some commercial potential nationally, but is very limited at an international level ▪ could be linked to a developing IP position. Funding the project: ▪ may bring economic benefit to Australia.

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
3 Marginal	The research plan: ▪ is clearly described, but may not be successful ▪ contains several study design problems or flaws that will limit the successful completion of the study ▪ will not significantly advance current knowledge in the field ▪ is not likely to achieve proof-of-concept ▪ may not be consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ has no expertise in most areas required for project success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has limited record of research commercialisation achievements including approved patents, industry consultation, licensing of IP ▪ does not have any significant record of commercial achievements ▪ has a limited ability to promote a viable commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is limited ▪ provides a description of a pathway to commercialisation that raises several concerns ▪ will be conducted in an environment with limited access to institutional commercial development advice and support structures, which is unlikely to support the likelihood of arriving at a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe ▪ may not meet the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ has limited commercial potential ▪ could be linked to a weak IP position. Funding the project: ▪ will not bring economic benefit to Australia.

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
2 Unsatisfactory	The research plan: ▪ has poorly described or underdeveloped objectives ▪ contains multiple major study design problems or flaws that will limit or prohibit the successful completion of the study ▪ is not likely to advance current knowledge in the field ▪ will not likely achieve proof-of-concept ▪ may not be consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ has no expertise in most areas required for project success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has little record of research commercialisation achievements including approved patents, industry consultation, licensing of IP ▪ does not have any significant record of commercial achievements ▪ has a very little potential to promote a viable commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is small ▪ does not contain a clear description of a pathway to commercialisation ▪ will not be conducted in an environment supportive of commercial development ▪ may not meet the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ has no commercial potential ▪ could be linked to a very weak IP position. Funding the project: ▪ will not bring economic benefit to Australia.

Category	Scientific Peer Reviewers only	Commercialisation Peer Reviewers only	
	Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40%	**Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) 20%**	**Commercial Potential 40%**
1 Poor	The research plan: ▪ has poorly described or under developed objectives ▪ contains multiple major study design problems or flaws that will limit or prohibit the successful completion of the study ▪ will not advance current knowledge in the field ▪ will not achieve proof of concept ▪ may not be consistent with the objectives of the Development Grant scheme. The scientific research team: ▪ has no expertise in most areas required for project success.	Relative to opportunity, the research team: ▪ has no record of research commercialisation achievements including approved patents, industry consultation, licensing of IP ▪ does not have any significant record of commercial achievements ▪ has no ability to promote a viable commercial outcome.	The commercial proposal: ▪ is linked to a human health issue where the size and/or impact for the potential market is too small for probable commercial viability ▪ does not contain a clear description of a pathway to commercialisation ▪ will not be conducted in an environment supportive of commercial development ▪ does not meet the scheme objectives. The product, process or technology: ▪ has no commercial potential ▪ has a non-viable IP position. Funding the project: ▪ would not increase the interest of commercial partners ▪ will not bring economic benefit to Australia.

Appendix C. NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy

Purpose

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

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

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

Policy approach

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

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

- **Research opportunity**: Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct.

- **Fair access**: Researchers should have access to funding support available through NHMRC grant schemes consistent with their experience and career stage.

- **Career diversity**: Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside of academia should not be disadvantaged. NHMRC recognises that time spent in sectors such as industry may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

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

Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review of applications for funding

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

- amount of time spent as an active researcher
- available resources, including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities

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

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

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

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

The period of career disruption may be used:

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

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

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

Career Disruption and eligibility to apply for Investigator Grants

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

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

Appendix D. Development Grants 2020 Guide to Applicants

1. Preparing an application

The following sections provide additional advice about parts of the application that are specific to Development Grants 2020.

- Applicants will complete the Sapphire Registration form for Development Grants 2020.
- Applicants should refer to the *Sapphire Learning and Training Resources* for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.
- Development Grants 2020 scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in Sapphire (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, see section 7 How to apply in the grant guidelines.

2. Application Requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completion of mandatory sections of My Profile (section 3 Profile Requirements) and My Profile Requirements for Development Grants (section 4 My Profile Requirements for Development Grants)
- Completed application form (section 5 Application Form Requirements)
- Grant Proposal as an attachment (section 5.8 Grant Proposal).

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

2.1 Minimum Data Requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date to allow NHMRC to start identifying suitable peer reviewers. Minimum data are indicated in the Sapphire application form by a blue flag (🚩) and are comprised of:

- Application title
- Administering institution
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Research Focus (yes/no)
- Project synopsis
- Privacy agreement
- Participating Institutions
- Research Classification:
    - Broad research area
    - Field of research
    - Peer Review Areas
    - Research keywords
- Chief Investigator A (complete CIA Role and Name)

Minimum data must be entered into Sapphire by 20 November 2019, 17:00 AEDT. Applicants should refer to section 7.3 Minimum data requirements of the Grant Guidelines for further information.

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

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

3. Profile Requirements

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

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

3.1 About My Profile

Provide your primary Administering Institution name under Primary Institution to ensure the Research Administration Office has access to view your profile. You may also allow the RAO to edit your profile.

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

3.2 Personal Information

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

3.3 Academic Information

Indicate whether you have been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and if applicable the year awarded.

3.4 Peer Review Information

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

You can add as many Fields of Research as required. 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 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 will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

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

3.6 Contributions to NHMRC

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

4. My Profile Requirements for Development Grants

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

It is important that relevant 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 the 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.

4.1 My Grants

The last 5 years of My Grants will be included in your Development Grants application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment. Any previous and/or current NHMRC funding, including offers received for future funding will be listed in reverse chronological order.

NHMRC grants previously awarded to you are automatically pre-populated. However, you should verify this information and notify the Sapphire Help Desk (sapphire.helpdesk@nhmrc.gov.au) if there are any discrepancies.

4.2 Other Funding

The last 5 years of Other Funding will be included in your Development Grants application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order. Provide as many details as you can in the spaces provided.

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

4.3 Career Disruptions

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

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

Career Disruption

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

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

Disruption Type

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

Impact

Applicants are required to provide a brief explanation of the impact the career disruption(s) has had on their research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to their career stage, including the percentage (%) full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Career Disruption. Applicants should not describe the nature of the career disruption in this field. Note that the information in this field will be provided to peer reviewers (*maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks*).

Additional Publication Outputs

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

Dates

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

4.4 Relative to Opportunity

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

Circumstances

Provide a brief explanation of the type of relative to opportunity circumstance *(maximum of 255 characters including spaces and line breaks).*

Impact

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

Date

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

4.5 Publications

Publication information can be uploaded by exporting your EndNote® Library as an .xml file. Further details on how to upload publications are provided in the *Sapphire Learning and Training Resources*.

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

The last 5 years of publications will be included in your Development Grants application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

4.6 Patents

The last 5 years of Patents will be included in your Development Grants application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Click '+' to start a new entry for any patents for which you contributed more than 20% of the development effort. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order. You will need to create separate entries for each patent.

Patent Number

Provide details of the patent number, a description of the patent and its applicability/impact. You will need to indicate the patent's current status, the patent office and the year in which the patent started. You should provide details of the named inventors of the patent in the free text box.

Funding Sources

In the provided tick boxes, indicate if the funding source was NHMRC, other Australian agency or international source.

If this patent was related to a research project that received NHMRC funding support, please select the relevant NHMRC grant(s).

4.7 Commercial and Product Outcomes

The last 5 years of Commercial and Product Outcomes will be included in your Development Grants application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment. Click '+' to start a new entry to provide details of any therapeutic products or commercial outcomes for which you contributed significantly to the development effort. Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order. You will need to create a new entry for each product or commercial outcome.

If this product or commercial outcome was related to a research project that received NHMRC funding support, please select the relevant NHMRC grant(s).

5. Application Form Requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to Development Grants 2020, 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*.

5.1 Creating an application

Click '+ New Application' to create an application.

Grant Opportunity

Select the grant round you wish to apply for. For example, 2020 Development Grants funding commencing in 2021.

Application Title

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

5.2 Application Details

All fields on this page marked with a flag (⚑) are mandatory and 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 generated by Sapphire. Please 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.

Grant Duration

Select the requested duration of your grant with reference to any limits specified in the Guidelines.

Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Health Research

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

You should only select 'Yes' if you can demonstrate that at least 20% of your research effort and 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*.

Project synopsis

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

Plain English summary

Describe the overall aims of the research and expected outcomes in simple terms that could be understood by the general public. Avoid the use of highly technical terms. This information may be used in grant announcements, media releases and other public documents, and by funding partners (where applicable) to determine whether the research proposal meets their priorities for funding *(maximum of 500 character limit including spaces and line breaks).*

Privacy agreement

NHMRC, as an agency under 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 (https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/privacy). Please ensure that you have carefully read and understood the Privacy Policy prior to completing the application. If you have not understood the Privacy Policy or require further clarification, please contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer via email (NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au) or letter (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601). Ensure you read and understand the NHMRC Privacy Policy.

Consent to provide information to International Peer Reviewers

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 take 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 should your personal information be released in breach of local privacy laws.

Partner organisation consent

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

5.3 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. For example, many universities administer research which will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. This information is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application.

Research institution

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

Complete this page for each institution if there is more than one. If the participating institution does not appear in the list please email the institution name to the Sapphire Help Desk (sapphire.helpdesk@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%

5.4 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 review panel and to aid the selection of appropriate peer reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's Funding Profile.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (⚑) are mandatory and must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

- Broad research area
- Field of research
- Peer Review Areas
- Research keywords
- Burden of Disease

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

5.5 Research Team

You may 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, please refer to section 4 Eligibility of the Grant Guidelines.

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

List all members of research team including CIs, AIs, Professional Research Personnel and Technical Support Staff. 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 that cannot be located using the search function will need to complete Sapphire registration.

Note: Click 'Invite to Register' to invite a colleague to complete Sapphire Registration and/or share your application with view/edit access. Enter the email address, followed by the tab key, select the corresponding option from the dropdown menu and click 'Submit'.

Chief Investigator A (CIA)

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 will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant.

Outline the background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal for each Chief Investigator.

Additional Chief Investigators (CIB – CIJ)

Click ‘+’ to Add Rows for additional CIs. Click the ‘Role’ dropdown to select a role.

Click ‘Name’ and begin typing to search for registered users. Click their name to select from the search results.

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.

Associate Investigators (AIs)

Click ‘+’ to Add Rows for AIs. Click ‘Associate Investigator name’ and begin typing to search for registered users. Click their name to select from the search results.

‘Position’ and ‘Relevant background and expertise’ are 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.

Others (Technical Support and Professional Research Persons)

Click ‘+’ to Add Rows for Technical Support and Professional Research Persons. Click ‘Role type ‘to select from the dropdown menu.

‘Position Title’ may be used for identifying a specific PRP or TSS role – i.e. Registered Nurse, Animal Handler etc.

5.6 Salary Package

Salary contributions for research staff (CIs, Professional Research Personnel and Technical Support Staff) are provided as Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The level of PSP requested in an application must match the roles and responsibilities of the position in the proposed research and the percentage of the PSP requested must reflect the required time commitment. Applicants must fully justify all requests for PSPs.

Applicants can only draw one salary from one NHMRC grant/award. Further information about PSPs, including the levels, is available on the NHMRC website.

This section only needs to be completed if you are seeking salary for a particular position.

Salary

Chief Investigators only

For each CI listed you must nominate the requested Personnel Support Package (PSP) level and percentage (%) required for each year of funding.

Note: If you (or CIs on your team) are applying for salaries across multiple schemes which would ultimately exceed 100 percent (%) if awarded, you will need to identify in each application which salary support position you/they will retain if all applications are successful, in the 'Relevant Background and expertise' free text field. Refer to section 5 of the Grant Guidelines for further details.

For all members of the Research Team

Salary package – indicate the PSP level for the candidate based on the level of work to be undertaken by the team member.

Salary - Indicate the % of a full PSP package the candidate is to be paid for each year of the grant (in whole numbers only). Applicants must apply for the exact proportion of a PSP that is required for the research being proposed.

Reason

Provide detailed justification for the salary that is being requested for the candidate. The PSP level and the percentage of salary should both be well justified.

Note: When awarding a budget, the panel will consider whether the PSPs requested are fully justified and reasonable given the time commitment indicated for this application.

5.7 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.

5.8 Grant Proposal

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

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

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

Grant Proposal (Upload)

To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the 'Upload New' button followed by the 'Upload File' button. Select the PDF file you wish to upload and then click 'Start upload' to upload your Grant Proposal. Click 'Save' or 'Save and return' to upload the document.

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

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

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

Table 1: Formatting Requirements

Component	**Component Requirements**
File format	The grant proposal must be saved and uploaded as a PDF file
File size	The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named using the following: APP ID_Applicant's Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf E.g.: APP1234567_Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Header	Application ID and 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.
Line spacing	Single
Language	English

Table 2: Grant Proposal Components

Component	**Page Limit**
Research Proposal	9 pages
References	2 pages
Commercialisation Business Case	9 pages
Chief Investigators' Research Achievements	2 pages per CI
Chief Investigators' Commercial Achievements	1 page per CI

A brief description of each component is provided below.

Research Proposal – 9 pages

The research proposal must address the essential components of your research and may include the following properties depending on the type of research

Component	Properties
Aims	Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of hypotheses to be tested.
Background	Provide a rationale for the project.
Research Plan – methods and techniques to be used	Outline the research plan in detail, including the following where appropriate: - detailed description of the experiment design - 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 ensure that the experimental results will be robust, unbiased and reproducible - details to achieve balance of male and female clinical participants, and male and female cell and animal models, including justification where it is not warranted - any ethical considerations - community involvement and/or plans to transfer knowledge to stakeholders or into practice - strengths and weaknesses of the study design and approach
Timeline	Provide a detailed timeline for the expected outcomes of the Research Proposal along with justification for the duration requested.
Outcomes and Significance	Describe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research plan, and the potential significance of the research.

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

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 cited work
- must be written in English.

Commercialisation Business Case - 9 Pages

This section should address the following assessment criteria:

- Commercial Potential (40% of overall score) – this includes submission of a detailed and feasible business case for the commercialisation of the proposed research.

Applicants must provide comprehensive evidence of their strategies to commercialise their product and bring it to market, and clearly outline how the proposed research meets the scheme objectives. The information provided in the Commercialisation Business Case will be critical in determining an application's Commercial Potential. This criterion represents 40% of the assessment.

The Commercialisation Business Case must use headings 1 – 3 (see below), and should provide the information outlined under each subheading.

1. Commercialisation work plan

This section should clearly outline how the project will drive toward a commercial outcome within a foreseeable timeframe. In the work plan applicants should:

- identify the route to market including the regulatory pathway
- reference the annual milestones
- indicate if any preliminary work has been undertaken
- provide a direct link between the business plan and the outcomes/benefits
- provide a risk management strategy that identifies commercial and technical risks, and mitigations for each
- outline strategies to commercialise their product and bring it in market, e.g., by licensing the product or establishing a start-up company
- detail their partnering strategy, or commitment from existing commercial partners. Where there are existing partners applicants should detail the support they are providing (cash or in kind contribution); the commercial partner's appraisal of the IP; and detail how partner support will be utilised
- demonstrate a strategic alignment (significance of project to the team and partners)
- outline the contribution of the Technology Transfer Office or similar commercialisation support (e.g., confirmation that conflict of interest management plans have been lodged with the Technology Transfer Office if there is a perceived conflict with the partner organisation).

2. Market analysis

The market analysis should:

- provide an analysis of the addressable market (which is not necessary only end users)
- include details of the target product profile
- detail the value proposition
- identify the existing and emerging competitors in this market
- indicate the proposal's competitive advantage
- explain how the commercialisation could lead to economic benefit to Australia.

3. IP management

Applicants should:

- provide details of background and anticipated IP, including information about ownership, rights and restrictions

- clearly indicate what IP will be generated by the research team as a result of this proposal, and the ownership implications
- detail how IP connected with or arising from this proposal will be managed
- describe how any IP that will be generated by this project aligns to the scheme objectives
- indicate what if any connection the IP owner has or will have to the project CIs or Participating Institutions.

Chief Investigators' Research Achievements - 2 Pages per CI

This section should address the following assessment criteria:

- Scientific Merit of the Proposal (Fitness for purpose of the science and quality of the scientific research team) 40% – this includes feasibility of the proposed research by the research team, and the record of scientific research achievements.

This section has two components:

- overall record of research achievements in the last 5 years
- the top 5 publications in the last 5 years.

Please note, NHMRC supports the Declaration on Research Assessment Principles (see section 4.8 of the Guide to NHMRC Peer Review 2018 for further detail) and encourages applicants and peer reviewers to describe the quality of publication/s, rather than rely on the quantity alone. This is critical in the assessment of relative to opportunity, including where applicants have had a career disruption. For these reasons, peer reviewers will pay attention to not only the overall record of achievements for each applicant, but particularly to the top five publications in the last five years.

Overall Record of Achievements in the last five years

Applicants are encouraged to use this section to identify aspects of their commercial achievements in addition to their publication record in the CV section. This includes any relative to opportunity considerations you wish the peer reviewers to take into consideration. Peer Reviewers will have access to the last five years of publications through the CV section, therefore, the following areas should be considered:

- career summary – including qualifications, employment and appointment history
- research support – including grants and fellowships
- contribution to field of research – this may include the impact of previous research including translation of research into health outcomes
- patents – this information should include if the patent has been licensed, when they have been licensed, to whom they have been licensed and if that license is current or not
- collaborations
- community engagement and participation
- professional involvement – including committees, conference organisation, conference participation
- international standing – including invitations to speak, international committees
- supervision and mentoring
- peer review involvement (including NHMRC, other granting organisations, manuscripts, editorial responsibilities)
- other contributions to NHMRC
- any other information you think is vital to your application.

Peer reviewers will use this information along with each CI's publication record, NHMRC Research Funding and Other Research Funding from the CV section as an indicator of the overall productivity of the research team.

Top 5 Publications in the last 5 years

Applicants are asked to list their top five publications in the last five years and reasons why these publications have been selected. Peer reviewers will use this information to assess the quality of the research team.

Chief Investigators' Commercial Achievements - 1 Page per CI

This section should address the following assessment criteria:

- Record of Commercial Achievements (relative to opportunity) (20% of overall score) – this includes any previous experience of the research team in the commercialisation of research.

Provide evidence of the CI's commercial achievements. Such experience may include any combination of:

- inventorship on approved patents
- industry consulting
- involvement in sponsored research programs
- licensing of their intellectual property
- direct involvement in industry placements.

5.9 Budget Proposal – 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 and that the charges included in the budget are accurately reflected (Proposed Budget – DRC and Equipment). 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 should 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.

5.10 Budget Proposal - DRC and Equipment

Details on permitted uses of NHMRC funds and setting of budgets can be found in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the NHMRC website.

Provide details on:

- the item type (Direct Research Costs or Equipment Costs)

- the name/description of the item
- the total value of the item requested for each year
- a justification for the particular item requested.

This information must be aligned with the proposed aims of the study, be detailed on a yearly basis and be fully justified (including, in the case of equipment, why the equipment cannot be provided by the Institution).

Note:

- NHMRC funds the direct costs of research based on advice from peer review. Applicants should provide detailed justification of budgets requested. Poorly justified budgets run the risk of having their budget adjusted.
- Funding cannot be used for infrastructure.
- There is no provision to increase funds for any reason.

Equipment

Applicants can request funding to pay for equipment costing over $10,000 that is essential to the research. The total equipment requested cannot exceed $80,000. Individual items of equipment costing less than $10,000 must be requested within DRCs.

Applicants must clearly outline the total value of all items of equipment for each year, why the equipment is required for the proposed research and why the equipment cannot be provided by the institution.

For each item of equipment requested, a written quotation must be received and held with the RAO of the Administering Institution, and be made available to NHMRC on request. The Administering Institution must be prepared to meet all service and repair costs in relation to equipment funded.

Funds will not be provided for the purchase of computers except where these are an integral component of a piece of laboratory equipment or are of a nature essential for work in the research field, for example, a computer which is dedicated to data collection from a mass spectrometer, or used for the manipulation of extensively large datasets (i.e. requiring special hardware).

Entering DRC and Equipment Costs

You will need to create a separate entry for each cost.

Click the plus (+) button to enter a cost.

For ‘Item Type’, select ‘Direct Research Cost’ or ‘Equipment’ from the drop down box.

Include a brief name/description of the item (50 character limit including spaces and line breaks).

Outline the cost of the item required for each year of the grant proposal. Only the relevant years should be completed.

Justification

Provide a comprehensive justification for the cost here *(500 character limit including spaces and line breaks)*.

6. Certifying your application

Once all Profile and CV details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in Sapphire. Certification is required of 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. The following tools are available to assist applicants in checking their applications:
  - Applicants retain responsibility for confirming that their application satisfies the stated eligibility requirements.
  - For funding schemes where the applicant has nominated a research budget, a summary of the requested budget is generated in Budget Proposal – DRC and Equipment.
  - A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at section 7 of this Appendix of this document.
  - Ensure you have read and understood the assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings required of CIAs and Administering Institutions as part of this step. These are outlined in section 7.7 Certification and Submission of the Grant Guidelines.
  - Note that certification will lock down the application and prevent further editing. The final reports produced at this time will include relevant information from your Profile, any subsequent changes to these areas of Sapphire will not appear on the application. If changes are needed after CIA certification but before submission to NHMRC, your RAO will need to reject the application in order for you to make the changes.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in 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 prior to the closing date.

7. Checklist for applicants

Before creating an application:

- Ensure Sapphire Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory profile fields are complete (indicated by an asterisk*).
- Familiarise yourself with the Guidelines and *Sapphire Learning and Training Resources.*.
- Check application lodgement close date and time.
- 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 your application may have, including addressing any additional selection 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 all obligations set out in the Code.
- Check your compliance with formatting and page requirements.
- Ensure any Approvals or licences are acquired or applied for.
- Check all information is correct and complete.
- Familiarise yourself with your obligations should you be successful.
- Certify the application and ensure RAO certification and submission occurs before the close date and time.

Remember, your RAO is your primary contact for advice and assistance. RAOs will contact the Sapphire Help Desk (sapphire.helpdesk@nhmrc.gov.au) for further advice if required.