New NHMRC Grant Program - Latest Updates

Judy Alexander, Associate Director, Research Grants
18 September 2018
Overview

• Summary of Investigator Grants, Synergy Grants; Ideas Grants; Strategic & Leveraging Grants
  ➢ Eligibility
  ➢ Funding
  ➢ Peer Review
  ➢ Co-funding

• Application and Grant Limits
• Information on Transition Arrangements
  ➢ Current NHMRC Fellows
  ➢ Project Grant CIs

• NHMRC Strategic Priorities for 2019 round
• Scheme Dates
• Sapphire
## New NHMRC Grant Funding Program

The new program will have 4 funding streams:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Stream</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigator Grants</td>
<td>Will provide the highest-performing researchers at all career stages with funding for their salary (if required) and a significant research support package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergy Grants</td>
<td>Will provide $5 million per grant for outstanding multi disciplinary research teams to work together to answer complex questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas Grants</td>
<td>Will support innovative and creative research projects, and be available to researchers with bright ideas at all career stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic and Leveraging Grants*</td>
<td>Will support priority driven research that addresses identified national need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes Centres of Research Excellence (CREs), Development Grants, Partnership Centres and Projects, Targeted Calls for Research, international collaborative schemes, and Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies.
Changes to the MREA

- Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) does not include any MRFF funding.
- No change in total NHMRC funding
Investigator Grants

**Summary**
- Aims to support high achieving researchers at all career stages
- Peer review will focus on track-record
- Will be tiered based on career stage

**Funding**
- **Provides funding for 5 years research support and salary (if required).**
- Packages without salary will be available for researchers who receive a salary from elsewhere (e.g., UON, CI NSW, Heart Foundation).
- Part-time salary options available for researchers who work part-time

**Limit**
- Single CI grants with limit of one grant
- **Holding an Investigator Grant rules you ineligible to apply for an Ideas Grant.**
- If you hold an Ideas Grant you are eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant
Investigator Grant Details

Part-time Investigator Grants
• Aim to cater for personal (e.g. carers) and professional (e.g. clinical) commitments
• Applicant selects salary in the range 10 – 90% in 10% increments
• Applicant selects full or <100% Research Support Package (RSP)
• Salary and RSP components provided for 5 years and finish on same date

Investigator Grants without salary
• Aim to support research of outstanding investigators who do not need a salary
  ➢ Hold other external fellowship support
  ➢ Applicants with substantial administrative responsibilities (PVCs, DVCR)
• Successful applicants would receive RSP only
# Investigator Grants – Streamlining of Fellowships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current NHMRC Fellowship</th>
<th>Corresponding Investigator Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Principal Research Fellowship Australia Fellowship</td>
<td>Leadership Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Research Fellowship</td>
<td>Leadership Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner Fellowship Level 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner Fellowship Level 1</td>
<td>Leadership Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Research Fellowship Levels A and B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Fellowship Level 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Fellowship Levels 1 and 2</td>
<td>Emerging Leadership Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career Fellowship</td>
<td>Emerging Leadership Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Investigator Grant Funding

### Salary Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Salary(^a)</th>
<th>Allocation method</th>
<th>No. of terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>$175,201</td>
<td>Self-select</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>$164,911</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>$141,474</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leadership</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>$107,750</td>
<td>Self-select for ≤10 years post-PhD(^c)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL1</td>
<td>$75,738</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Salary per annum (AUD). Salaries will increase in line with indexation and are quoted as 1 FTE.

\(^b\) For example, a researcher may hold L1 once, L2 twice and L3 twice to have a total of five terms.

\(^c\) Or equivalent

- Allows for up to 35 years of salary support.
- Previous/Current Fellowships don’t count towards maximum number of terms, but do affect eligibility to apply at different levels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest NHMRC Fellowship held</th>
<th>EL1</th>
<th>EL2</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None previously held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career Fellowship</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Fellowship Level 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development Fellowship Level 2</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Research Fellowship</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Principal Research Fellowship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Fellowship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **EL1** indicates eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD or equivalent.
- **L1** indicates eligible.
- **EL2** indicates ineligible.
# Investigator Grant Funding

## Research Support Packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tiers</th>
<th>RSP per annum(^a)</th>
<th>Allocation Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>LT4</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>Peer review – based on overall score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT3</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT2</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LT1</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leadership</td>
<td>ELT2</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Automatic allocation according to EL level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELT1</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Leadership Level RSPs are allocated based on peer review score.
- Maximum Investigator Grant award value is $3,876,005
Investigator Grants – Peer Review

Criteria: Track Record (70%) and Knowledge Gain (30%)
- New Track Record assessment framework: publications (35%), impact (20%), and leadership (15%)
- Knowledge Gain: research significance and quality

1. Publications (35%)
   - 10 year list (taking Career Disruption into account)
   - Five best publications

2. Research Impact (20%) * Case Study
   - Knowledge
   - Health
   - Economic
   - Social

3. Leadership (15%)
   - Research programs and team leadership
   - Institutional leadership
   - Research policy and professional leadership
   - Research mentoring

- Shift focus away from inputs (e.g. grants received) towards outcomes
- Future trial of bibliometric indicators
## Framework for track record assessment: Impact
Research impact to be presented as a case study

### 2. Research Impact indicators *Case Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of scientific reach and influence</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Healthcare cost savings</td>
<td>End-user/public engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in clinical research</td>
<td>IP development</td>
<td>Community health benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy leadership</td>
<td>Industry collaboration</td>
<td>Wellbeing of end-user and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical guidelines</td>
<td>Start-up company</td>
<td>Reducing inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Product to market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of product/intervention</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Investigator Grants – Peer Review

- Streamline process to reduce peer review burden on research sector
  - panel only
  - no interviews, discussion by exception
  - shorter process allows separation of open/close dates from Ideas Grants

- Improve confidence in the review process
  - five assessors per application

- Key Dates
  - Open 5 December
  - Min. data 16 January
  - Close 6 February
Synergy Grants

Summary
• Enable outstanding multi disciplinary teams to address complex questions.
  ➢ Incentive for outstanding researchers to work together
  ➢ Encourages diversity in teams.
• Peer review will focus on track-record, relative to opportunity.
  ➢ A multi disciplinary team of mid-career researchers can be competitive.
• Replaces current Program Grant scheme.

Funding
• $5 million per grant over 5 years.
  ➢ NHMRC aim to fund 10 synergy grants per year.

Limit
• 4-10 CIs per grant with limit of one grant as CI

Criteria
• Track Record (40%), Synergy (30%), Knowledge Gain (30%)

Key Dates
➢ Open 6 March
➢ Min. data 17 April
➢ Close 1 May
Synergy Grants – Peer Review

- Streamline process to reduce peer review burden on research sector
  - panel only
  - no interviews, discussion by exception

- Improve confidence in the review process
  - at least five assessors per application
  - broad expertise to assess Synergy and Knowledge Gain
  - discipline expertise to assess Track Record of each CI
Ideas Grants

Summary
• Focus on new ideas and innovative and creative research projects
  ➢ Foster ‘high-risk, high reward’ projects
• Available to researchers of all career stages
  ➢ Greater funding opportunities for early and mid-career researchers
  ➢ Particularly suitable for researchers who are not as yet competitive for an investigator grant
• Further refinement anticipated in the future is two rounds a year for Ideas Grants.

Funding
• Funding based on the requested budget - up to 5 years
• Research support up to $1.5 million can be requested.
• Salaries for research staff, including CIs, can be included

Limit
• 1-10 CIs per grants, limit of two grants with conditions

Criteria
• Research Quality (35%), Innovation and Creativity (25%), Significance (20%), Feasibility (20%). No track record criteria, although it would still be applicable to feasibility
Ideas Grants – Peer Review

- **Streamline process to reduce peer review burden on research sector**
  - panel only
  - no external assessments or rebuttals, discussion by exception
  - shorter process allows separation of open/close dates from Investigator Grants

- **Improve confidence in the review process**
  - four assessors per application

- **Key Dates**
  - Open 6 March
  - Min. data 10 April
  - Close 8 May
Co-funding

The following organisations are expected to partner NHMRC in funding

- Department of Health (MRFF) (Ideas, Synergy and Investigator Grants)
- Cancer Councils (Ideas Grants only)
- Cancer Australia & Funding Partners (Ideas Grants only)

- MRFF funded Grants will be awarded in merit order to applicants whose research aligns with MRFF priorities.

- MRFF may also fund grants under the MRFF Million Minds Mission. The program will support research to improve the diagnosis and treatment of people with mental health issues.

- MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program. The aim of the MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program is to increase the talent among the health and medical research workforce through Fellowships. (Investigator Grants only)
Strategic and Leveraging Grants

Summary
• Supports research that addresses identified national needs
  ➢ New funding scheme - Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies
  ➢ Existing schemes
    ▪ Targeted Calls for Research
    ▪ Centres of Research Excellence
    ▪ Development Grants
    ▪ International collaborative schemes
    ▪ Partnership Centres/ Partnership Projects

Funding
• Funding and duration of each grant will be dependent on individual scheme

Limit
• Will depend on individual scheme. No capping on applications relative to Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants.
Application and Grant Limits (1)

Limits on the number of applications

- Maximum of two (2) applications per round can be submitted by any individual across the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Type</th>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Synergy</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Strategic &amp; Leveraging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Number of applications allowed per round</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1#</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Individuals may apply for an Investigator Grant concurrently with an Ideas Grant, however if both applications are successful only the Investigator Grant will be awarded.
Application and Grant Limits (2)

- A maximum of two (2) grants can be held concurrently by any individual across the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas schemes.

- Except:
  - individuals who hold two (2) Ideas Grants can also hold a Synergy Grant
  - individuals who hold two (2) Ideas Grants can apply for, and hold an Investigator Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Type</th>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Synergy</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Strategic &amp; Leveraging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of each grant type</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that can be held</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Individuals who hold one or two Ideas Grants can apply for, and hold an Investigator Grant, but their RSP will be discounted (50% for each Ideas Grant) until at least one Ideas Grant has ended.

- **Note**: Holding an Investigator Grant rules you ineligible to apply for an Ideas Grants, but not the reverse.
Transition Arrangements

Current Grant Program
• All existing grants (and applications) will complete their term.

New Grant Program (open late 2018 - early 2019 for funding commencing in 2020)
• A researcher’s portfolio of NHMRC Fellowship, Project and Program Grants held on 1 January 2020 will affect eligibility and/or RSP levels.

• These effects will cease as the existing grants expire.
NHMRC Fellows – transitional eligibility

**Existing NHMRC Fellows**

- May not hold a concurrent Investigator Grant
- May apply for Ideas Grants and/or a Synergy Grant (subject to round application limit)
- May apply for an Investigator Grant in the penultimate year of their Fellowship, to commence the next year.
- Existing Fellowship will impact minimum level of Investigator grant which can be applied for
- May apply for an Investigator Grant and one Ideas Grant in the final year of their Fellowship.
  - If both are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded.
Project Grants – Transitional Eligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants held as Chief Investigator (CIA – CIJ) on 1 January 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cl on 0 Project or Program Grants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator Grant scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% RSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cl on 1 Project Grant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator Grant scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% reduction of RSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for 2 Ideas Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cl on ≥2 Project Grants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator Grant scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% reduction of RSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for 1 Ideas Grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NHMRC Strategic Priorities

Each year the NHMRC will identify strategic priorities for funding. NHMRC’s current research strategic priorities are:

• ATSI research and researchers
  Not a new priority and is consistent with previous grant structure

• Health Services Research
  Increasing the number of health services research grants is a strategic priority. Of the total 1035 competitive grants awarded in 2017, only 6.9% of these grants were for Health Services Research

• 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.
# NHMRC Scheme Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Investigator Grants</th>
<th>Synergy Grants</th>
<th>Ideas Grants</th>
<th>Clinical Trials &amp; Cohort Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applications open</strong></td>
<td>5 December 2018</td>
<td>6 March 2019</td>
<td>6 March 2019</td>
<td>6 March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum data due</strong></td>
<td>16 January 2019</td>
<td>17 April 2019</td>
<td>10 April 2019</td>
<td>10 April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Submission Deadline</strong></td>
<td>30 January 2019</td>
<td>26 April 2019</td>
<td>1 May 2019</td>
<td>1 May 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applications close</strong></td>
<td>6 February 2019</td>
<td>1 May 2019</td>
<td>8 May 2019</td>
<td>8 May 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easter/Anzac Day Public holidays around this time.
The University will be closed Friday 19 April - Tuesday 23 April 2019 (inclusive) and Thursday 25 April 2019.

* Internal UON dates are approximate
### NHMRC Scheme Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Centres of Research Excellence 2018</th>
<th>Partnership Projects Rd 3 2018</th>
<th>Development Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications open</td>
<td>24 October 2018</td>
<td>2 August 2018</td>
<td>14 November 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum data due</td>
<td>21 November 2018</td>
<td>21 November 2018</td>
<td>23 January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Submission Deadline*</td>
<td>28 November 2018</td>
<td>28 November 2018</td>
<td>30 January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>5 December 2018</td>
<td>5 December 2018</td>
<td>6 February 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easter/Anzac Day Public holidays around this time.
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* Internal UON dates are approximate
Sapphire

RGMS (built in 2009) is being replaced with Sapphire

• New features advertised include:
  ➢ Auto-saving: your work is saved as you go, so you no longer lose any information if the system times out.
  ➢ Live character counting:

• Researcher Profile and CV information in RGMS will be migrated across to Sapphire.

• Sapphire will go live in late Q3 and will be available for all new grant opportunities. Currently there is a planned trial using the Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) scheme.

• RGMS will continue to be used for grant opportunities already in progress and post-award management.
Questions?

Where to keep up to date

NHMRC
- Research Tracker
- Grant Connect – Grant Guidelines for new schemes are now available

UON R&I Services
- Via NHMRC Research Email List

- Please direct any questions to:
  Email: research-applications@newcastle.edu.au