

Elite Researcher Grants

Guidelines

2026

Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR)

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Call for applications

NSW Health invites eligible host organisations to nominate researchers for an Elite Researcher Grant. Up to \$2.25 million is available in 2026-27 to fund up to three Elite Researcher Grants.

There are no specific priority research areas however, research focused on cardiovascular health is **not eligible** for funding. Research projects exclusively focused on cancer are also **not eligible**, however, if the research is relevant for a range of diseases or patient cohorts, but uses cancer as an exemplar application, it may be considered.

Host organisations need to address why the proposed research is important, why it is a priority for them, and why it is a priority for NSW Health.

Grant objectives

Elite Researcher Grants aim to promote NSW as a global leader in research by attracting talented researchers to conduct research in NSW.

Elite Researcher Grants fund and incentivise talented researchers to move to NSW to:

- conduct pioneering and innovative research and drive discoveries with the long-term aim of improving health and wellbeing
- increase the national and international competitiveness of NSW research
- develop new collaborations and partnerships for research and translation within NSW, Australia and internationally
- support leadership development
- build NSW capacity in a strong, vibrant and highly skilled research workforce
- realise long-term sustained economic impact for NSW
- leverage Australian Government funding opportunities to further research and its translation in NSW
- embed high-quality, innovative research in the NSW health system
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase research impact and translation.

Funding amount

Elite Researcher Grants have a three-five year duration. A maximum total grant amount of \$750,000 will be awarded per grant.

Host organisations and other partners are expected to provide matched funding at a minimum of 50% of

the grant awarded, in addition to any in-kind contribution. See the section on host organisation requirements on page 6.

In addition, a one-off funding amount of up to \$10,000 for the researcher’s relocation expenses (and up to another \$20,000 for family relocation expenses) may be available with appropriate justification. See page 12 for more information.

Indicative timeline

Stage	Date
Call for applications opens	July 2026
Applications close	06 Nov 2026 5pm AEST
Outcomes notified	March 2027
Elite Researchers relocate to NSW and research projects commence	Within 12 months of award notification or by negotiation

Application process

All applications for Elite Postdoctoral Researcher Grants must be submitted by 5pm (AEST) on 6 November 2026.

Further information, including the application form and the submission process, is available via the [OHMR website](#). All applicants will receive an email to acknowledge receipt within 72 business hours. It is the applicant’s responsibility to follow up if no acknowledgement email is received.

Eligibility

Applications must meet all eligibility criteria. These should be addressed in the application prepared by the host organisation.

Eligible areas of research

There are no specific priority research areas however, research focused on cardiovascular health is **not eligible** for funding. Research projects exclusively focused on cancer are also **not eligible**, however, if the research is relevant for a range of diseases or patient cohorts, but uses cancer as an exemplar application, it may be considered.

Funding will support researchers working across the research spectrum including in basic science, biomedical, clinical medicine and health services research, data science, and population health research. Grants also support research towards the development of novel therapeutics.

Host organisations need to address why the proposed research is important, why it is a priority for them, and why it is a priority for NSW Health.

Funding opportunities for cancer and cardiovascular health are available through the [Cancer Institute NSW](#) and [Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program](#).

Eligible application

Applications will only be accepted from eligible host organisations and must be signed by the nominated elite researcher.

Each host organisation may submit a maximum of one application. If an organisation is administering grant funds on behalf of a separate host organisation, this will not be counted towards the administering organisation's limit.

Applications will not be accepted directly from researchers.

All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Submit a complete application

The host organisation must complete the application form fully, attach all relevant and required documentation, agree to the declaration on the form and receive certification from the elite researcher, host and administering organisations and other parties if required.

Elite researcher requirements

For the purpose of these grants, an elite researcher is a researcher who:

- is currently living and working overseas and is willing to relocate to NSW for the period of the grant
- has been specifically identified by the host organisation as a high-priority target for recruitment, aligning with existing research programs
- is a highly-talented leader in their research field, with identified potential to undertake internationally significant research with high impact results in NSW
- has demonstrated capacity to lead a team and an innovative, high impact research program
- has demonstrated capacity as a Chief Investigator to secure grant funding
- has developed collaborations with other researchers in their given field
- has demonstrated involvement in research capacity building and leadership initiatives.

Moving from overseas to NSW

The researcher must not currently live or work in Australia but may be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia who has been living and working overseas. If funding is awarded, the researcher must move to NSW. The researcher must reside in NSW and be employed by an eligible host organisation for the full grant period.

Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

If the researcher is not an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia, awarding of funding will be conditional on obtaining an appropriate working visa for the full term of the funding period. This process is to be facilitated by the host organisation.

Referee Reports

At least two referee reports for the nominated researcher should be provided. The reports may be in the format preferred by the host organisation, should address the selection criteria and should contain the names and contact details of the referees.

Host organisation requirements

The host organisation is where most of the research is conducted.

The host organisation must be in NSW, conduct health and medical research, and be:

- a university
- an independent medical research institute
- a not-for-profit organisation that conducts health and medical research
- a local health district or other public health organisation.

The host organisation has a key role to play in supporting the elite researcher who will be moving to NSW from overseas.

The host organisation will provide the appropriate infrastructure support for the research project including wet/dry lab space, computer equipment and desk space etc.

The host organisation is required to provide additional in-kind and cash support to the project as outlined below:

- cash contribution of no less than 50% of the total grant funding, and
- in-kind contribution - no specific percentage requirement however identification of in-kind support is strongly recommended to demonstrate the host organisation's support and commitment.

All support should be detailed in the application form and will be assessed against the selection criteria during the review process.

The host organisation is responsible for consideration of any logistical support requested, including travel arrangements and organising temporary accommodation.

An authorised representative of the host organisation is required to review the application form and to certify that the organisation complies with the requirements of the grant.

If the host organisation is a NSW Health organisation, grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation that can manage funds across financial years as the full funding amount will be paid upfront. Please refer to the section on administering organisation requirements below.

Host organisation statement of support

A statement of support signed by the chief executive of the host organisation should be submitted with the application, detailing:

- why this particular researcher has been selected for nomination by the host
- alignment of the proposed research program with current and proposed research within the host organisation, and how the proposed research would build on research already undertaken in NSW
- the support that will be provided (cash and in-kind) by the host organisation.

Partner statement of support

A statement of support signed by the chief executive of any partner organisation(s) should also be submitted with the application, where additional support will be provided by a partner organisation. The statement should outline and confirm any cash or in-kind commitments

Administering organisation requirements

An administering organisation is only required where the funds are held by a separate organisation to the host organisation.

In such cases, the administering organisation will enter into the funding agreement with NSW Health, manage the funds, submit financial reports and coordinate other reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement.

Grant funds must be paid to an administering organisation that can manage funds across financial years, as the full grant amount will be paid upfront.

The administering organisation must be:

- a university
- a medical research institute, or
- a not-for-profit organisation that conducts health and medical research.

Note: For-profit industry organisations are not eligible to be host or administering organisations or to apply for funding but may be partners on the grant.

Selection criteria

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

Applications should be written in plain English.

Elite researcher (40%)

Elite researchers will be assessed against the following criteria:

- is a highly-talented leader in their research field, capable of undertaking internationally significant research with high impact results in NSW
- track record in research and research impact, relative to opportunity, directly related to the topic area(s) and methodology of the research project
- research, clinical and industry experience, including demonstrated capacity to develop, contribute to and lead multidisciplinary teams and a high impact research program
- the researcher is of exceptional international standard and has been specifically identified by the host organisation as a high-priority target for recruitment, aligning with existing research programs
- demonstrated capacity as a Chief Investigator to secure grant funding and deliver outcomes within the funded period
- demonstrated involvement in research capacity building and leadership initiatives, including contributions within the researcher's profession and the research community outside their current role
- experience in research projects that involve collaborations to bridge different disciplines and enhance competitiveness and innovation.

Research project and team (40%)

A clear and detailed description and justification for the project is required, including aims, methodology, and expected outputs and outcomes. The research project will be assessed against the following criteria:

- potential to achieve impact against one or more of the strategic outcomes of the [NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy](#)
- evidence of a gap in knowledge, provided by prior systematic reviews and/or gap analyses, and a clearly articulated need for the research
- how the proposed project will advance existing knowledge and why this is important
- the extent to which the proposed research is innovative and novel; why it is a priority for the host organisation, a priority for NSW Health and how it aligns with the host organisation's existing program of research
- clarity of the research aim(s) and research question(s)
- strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology in achieving the aims of the project
- consideration of health outcomes and the impact of the proposed research on this
- program logic, with the potential outputs and outcomes of the research and how the research will improve clinical practice and/or patient outcomes in the short or long term
- consideration of equity of health outcomes and the impact of the proposed research on this
- active inclusion of consumers across various levels of research activity as appropriate
- feasibility of successfully delivering the research project within the proposed timeframe
- the plan for research translation and impact, including consideration of data management and access, commercialisation and intellectual property where appropriate
- engagement with appropriate partners to support translation where appropriate
- the skills of the proposed research team that are relevant to the project and its translation, and how each team member has the ability to contribute meaningfully to the research
- strong project governance structure with evidence of appropriate and sustainable relationships with key stakeholders including those who will likely use the research findings.

Budget

The budget should be detailed and well-justified and will be assessed as part of the research project and team on:

- value for money
- appropriateness and purpose of each line item

- existing funding for the research, and how this relates to the additional funding requested without duplication
- other contributions and support for the project.

Leadership and capacity building (10%)

The application must provide a vision for leadership and capacity including:

- development of leadership skills during the researcher's career to date
- how these will be further developed during the period of funding, and what the outcomes of this will be
- how the grant will help to build and maintain research capacity in NSW.

Examples of leadership and capacity building activities include:

- leading a program of research with significant impact
- recruitment and retention of research staff
- mentoring and supervision of other researchers including creating opportunities for PhD and early-mid career researchers
- leading collaborations within NSW, Australia and internationally
- leading applications for national grant funding, including facilitating the involvement of junior researchers
- leading or active roles in relevant networks, advisory committees or governance groups
- leading collaborations with clinicians and others involved in translation of research findings.

Support from host and partner organisations (10%)

The success of this program depends on significant financial and non-financial support from host and partner organisations. Host and partner organisation support will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a minimum cash contribution of 50% of the grant value
- in-kind support including infrastructure, logistical and other support provided to the project
- alignment of the research project with current and proposed research within the host organisation and details of how a supportive environment will be provided for the researcher and the project.

Conditions of funding

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Only one application will be accepted per host organisation.
2. Elite Researcher Grants are open to researchers who currently live and work overseas. Researchers already residing in Australia, even if on temporary visas, are not eligible.
3. Research funded through an Elite Researcher Grant must be conducted in the New South Wales public health system or an affiliated organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partner).
4. Funding is conditional on the Elite Researcher and the chief executive(s) of the host/ administering organisation(s) agreeing to the **required declarations** when submitting the application form. These declarations outline the obligations of each party.
5. Elite Researcher Grants are not fellowships. Grants are for research projects or programs and can cover a combination of salaries of the elite researcher, research team, backfill for clinicians to quarantine research time, consumables and equipment.
6. Neither Elite Researcher Grant funding nor the required cash contribution from the host organisation may be spent on non-research activities such as teaching.
7. Neither Elite Researcher Grant funding nor the required cash contribution from the host organisation may be spent on capital works, general maintenance costs, organisational infrastructure or overheads, telephone/ communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities.
8. Host organisations are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the subject area of the application. Applications must clearly describe the purpose of the additional funding and justify that the additional research will be complementary not duplicative and is value for money.
9. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC funding, provided there is no duplication of research effort.

Clinical practice

Clinicians, including medical, nursing, and allied health professionals, are encouraged to apply.

If the elite researcher will undertake clinical duties during the period of the grant, the nature, FTE commitment and alignment with research activities for these should be detailed in the application. The Chief Executive of the local health district or other employer will be required to sign the declaration on the application form to confirm the employment opportunity.

Reimbursement of relocation costs

A copy of the *NSW Health Relocation Costs Claim Form* will be provided to successful recipients.

NSW Health will accept applications for reimbursement for relocation costs under the following rules:

- NSW Health will pay any funds to the administering organisation, not to the provider or applicant directly. The administering organisation will then reimburse the applicant.
- Reimbursement of relocation costs is available to recipients of the grants and their immediate families only.
- Evidence of three quotes or other price comparison must be attached to the form. Dates must match actual travel dates.
- If the application is successful, NSW Health will pay the lowest price quoted. Top up funding (for example, to fly business class) may be paid by the recipient or host/ administering organisation.
- A copy of the original official receipt for payment for services must be provided when available. Reimbursement will not be provided until this has been supplied. Other evidence to support the application may also be requested.
- Items which may be considered for funding include:
 - packing and unpacking services
 - removalist costs
 - flights (economy, one flight per person, one way to Sydney).
- Other relocation costs are not eligible.

Program governance, impact and translation

Program logic and research impact

Host organisations are required to submit a program logic diagram with their application, including project aim, inputs, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes and impacts. A video explaining how to complete a program logic may be viewed [here](#).

Research impact assessment

The program logic is required at application stage to optimise the probability of research impact. If the research is funded, the program logic will guide the measurement of impact throughout the project and at its conclusion.

Note that outcomes and impacts may not be realised during the funded period; they may be projected to occur in future. Particularly for basic science, the 'next users' who are responsible for taking the research findings to the next step for translation should be involved from the start of the project so they understand the research and can move the findings towards translation.

Research impact will be considered across six domains:

1. Knowledge Advancement
2. Capacity and Capability Building
3. Policy and Practice
4. Health and Community
5. Economic Benefit
6. Sustainability

Further information can be found [here](#).

Research translation

All research projects should have potential to lead to changes in health outcomes, clinical practice or health policy in the short and/or long term, even if not during the funded period. Applications must clearly describe:

- the long-term goal and clinical significance of the research
- the expected pathway for this to occur (note this may not be linear)
- how the researchers will engage with 'next users', i.e. research partners and other stakeholders who will take the research to the next step on the translation pathway.

Appendix A contains two examples of translation pathways. Applicants may use their preferred framework.

Intellectual property

To maximise benefits arising from the public funding of research, all recipients must comply with the [National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research](#) as a condition of funding. In addition, intellectual property (IP) arrangements should be agreed between all research partners and organisations. IP arrangements must cover both background IP and IP that is developed during the project. IP arrangements should consider the contributions of all parties. The arrangements should be detailed in the application.

Please refer to NSW Health's Policy Directive *Intellectual Property arising from Health Research* which provides a clear and consistent guide for public health organisations to protect their intellectual property arising from research. NSW Health has also released a *Commercialisation Framework*. Both documents are available [here](#).

Ethics and regulation

The host organisation (and where appropriate the administering organisation) must certify that the project has received all appropriate research ethics and regulatory approvals and must ensure these are maintained as required for the duration of the grant. All organisations and personnel contributing to the project must comply with (or their replacements and other relevant National Health and Medical Research Council policies):

- the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- the NHMRC Open Access Policy
- the National Statement of the Ethical Conduct of Human Research
- Ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities
- Principles for consumer involvement in research funded by the Medical Research Future Fund
- Statement on consumer and community involvement in health and medical research
- Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research
- the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (including but not limited to the application of the 3Rs 'replacement', 'reduction' and 'refinement' at all stages of animal care and use)

All organisations and personnel contributing to the project must also comply with any requirements of:

- relevant Commonwealth or State or Territory laws; and of
- regulatory bodies that have jurisdiction over the project. This includes, but is not limited to, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

Further information and resources on ethics and governance are available [here](#).

Equity of health outcomes

It is important that all research projects consider and respond to the distribution of the burden of disease within the population and the needs of higher risk and priority populations where appropriate. These may include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, individuals from a non-English speaking background, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and people living in regional, rural and remote areas among others.

Relevant partners should be engaged early to ensure that the research design and conduct will be effective and appropriate for these population groups.

NSW Health is committed to achieving gender equity in healthcare. Research projects must consider gender and sex in their design, and ensure research is accessible to people of all genders. Please refer to the [NSW Health Gender Equity Action Plan](#), the [NHMRC Gender Equity Strategy](#) and the NHMRC and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing joint [Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research](#).

Important considerations

Clinical trials

The NSW Government is committed to improving equity of access to clinical trials in NSW.

As part of this commitment, OHMR run a Regional, Rural and Remote Clinical Trials Enabling Program. More information can be found on our [website](#).

If your application involves a Clinical Trial, we encourage you to consider how patients in regional, rural and remote areas can access it. Our colleagues in the Program would welcome the opportunity to connect with researchers to talk about the support they can provide to make this happen. Please

contact our team if you would like to discuss this further at moh-rrr-ctep@health.nsw.gov.au.

Commercialisation Training Program

NSW Health has developed a [training program in commercialisation](#), which grant recipients are encouraged to complete during the funding period unless completed previously.

Research collaborations and partnerships

Host organisations are strongly encouraged to identify and engage relevant stakeholders, partners and networks who will provide meaningful contributions to delivery of the research project and implementation of outcomes.

Partners may include:

- NSW Health system partners including NSW Ministry of Health, pillars, statewide health services, and Agency for Clinical Innovation networks
- Local health districts and specialty health networks
- Advanced Health Research Translation Centres and Centres for Innovation in Regional Health
- Universities and medical research institutes
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- Primary Health Networks
- Research networks
- Non-government organisations
- Industry
- Consumers and patients.

Partnerships may vary in type and intensity from informal arrangements such as the provision of occasional advice, to membership of the research team or project steering committee, to formal partnerships that are the subject of a written agreement between the parties.

For assistance with engaging with a NSW Ministry of Health policy branch, please contact MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au.

Application and assessment process

Applications for Elite Researcher Grants will only be accepted from host organisations and will not be accepted directly from researchers.

The application and assessment process is outlined below:

Step 1: Identification of applicant

An eligible host organisation identifies a potential applicant.

Step 2: Apply

The host organisation completes an application via the [OHMR website](#).

Step 3: Eligibility check

NSW Health will determine if each application has satisfied the eligibility criteria.

Step 4: Review by expert panel

An independent expert review panel will assess each eligible application against the selection criteria.

Step 5: Funding recommendation

The expert review panel will agree on the final ranking of all eligible applications and will make recommendations regarding funding to NSW Health.

Step 6: Decision and notification

NSW Health will determine grant recipients and amounts. All host organisations will be informed as to whether they have been awarded funding.

Step 7: Grant agreements

NSW Health will contact host and administering organisations for successful projects to execute a funding agreement. A standard, non-negotiable funding agreement will be used.

Relative to opportunity policy

Nominee's track records will be assessed by expert reviewers against the selection criteria relative to opportunity, which means in the context of their career stage and personal circumstances. These circumstances might include career disruption due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities, as well as other relative to opportunity considerations as outlined in the National

Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC's) Relative to Opportunity Policy, which can be accessed [here](#).

Your host organisation must certify they have evidence of career disruption and can provide this to NSW Health if requested.

Post award requirements

A schedule for reporting will be outlined in the funding agreement and will include a requirement to provide:

- annual progress reports
- annual financial reports
- a final report and financial acquittal following the conclusion of the term of the grant
- post-grant reports related to research translation and research impact
- ad hoc requests for information or interviews to support program evaluation if required.

All Elite Researchers are expected to mentor one or more junior researchers. NSW Health may make contact to facilitate this arrangement.

Program evaluation

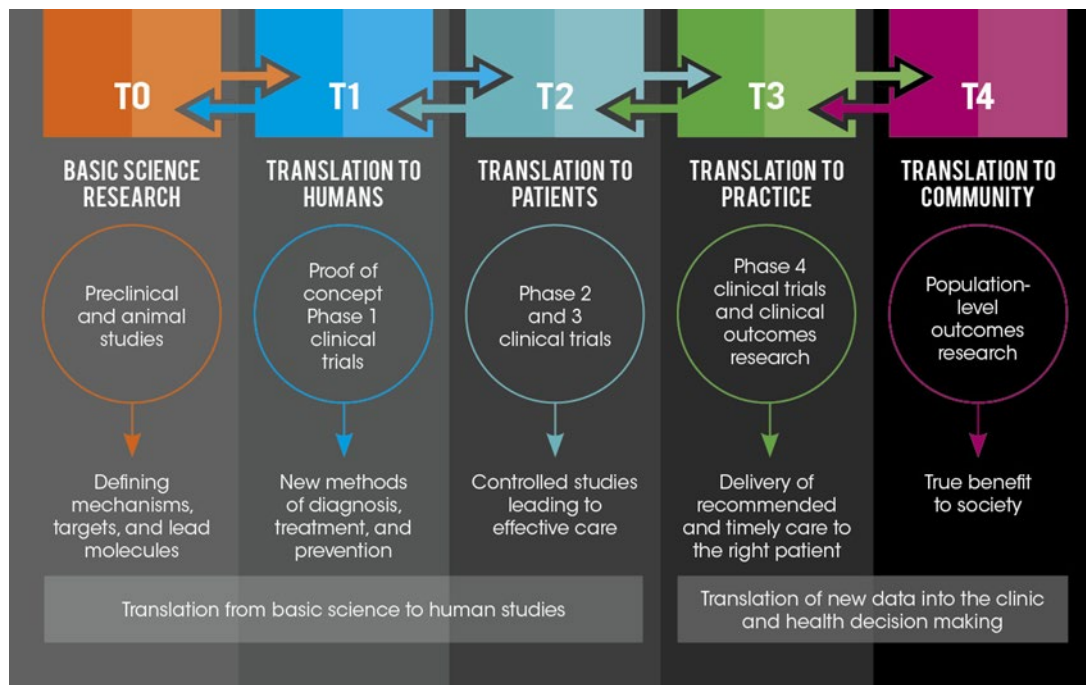
Each NSW Health grant program will periodically be assessed to ensure it is meeting its objectives. Evaluations are guided by an [Evaluation Framework](#) and done in collaboration with the host/ administering organisation(s) and funding recipients. Recipients and host/ administering organisations may be required to supply information and meet with NSW Health staff to support program evaluation.

Further Information

Any queries regarding the Elite Researcher grants may be directed by email to: MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au

Appendix A: Examples of research translation frameworks

Example 1. Biomedical Research Translation Framework



Source: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Translational Research Institute

<https://tri.uams.edu/about-tri/what-is-translational-research>

Example 2. Health services research translation framework



Further copies of this document can be downloaded
from the NSW Health website:
medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au