



# Supporting flexible working arrangements for researchers via Investigator Grants

NHMRC's Investigator Grant scheme has been designed to offer researchers flexible working arrangements, with part-time opportunities available for both professional and personal reasons. The objective of the Investigator Grant scheme is to support the research program of outstanding investigators at all career stages. NHMRC recognises the importance of funding continuity provided through the research support package with the five year term of an Investigator Grant, giving researchers the confidence to employ staff for their research program.

## Professional part-time researchers

Professional part-time research allows professionals to maintain a funded position (e.g. in policy, industry, clinical, public health or equivalent practice, teaching) and to continue their research program. NHMRC wants to support and encourage health-related professionals to engage and contribute to Australian health and medical research, with the objective of facilitating the translation of research into clinical practice, policy and health systems and effective commercialisation of research discoveries.

## Personal part-time researchers

Personal part-time research supports researchers who experience a career disruption<sup>1</sup> by allowing them to divide their time between their personal situation and conducting research. Offering researchers who experience a career disruption the flexibility of working part-time helps NHMRC ensure that these researchers are not disadvantaged in applying for Investigator Grants, and consequently enables NHMRC to support excellent researchers at all career stages irrespective of their personal circumstance.

NHMRC understands that researchers' personal circumstances can change over time, and offers the flexibility for grants to be converted from full-time to part-time, and from part-time to full-time. Further details about increasing a time commitment for an Investigator Grant are outlined in the Investigator Grants grant guidelines.

## Suspension of Investigator Grants for career disruptions

Investigator Grant recipients may suspend their grant (both salary and Research Support Package (RSP)) during a career disruption. In this instance, the grant's end date will be extended commensurate with the period(s) of suspension. Alternatively, so that a researcher's program of research can continue in their absence, they may cease the salary component of their Investigator Grant during the period of the career disruption while their Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP. If the Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP during the researcher's career disruption period, then:

- the grant's duration remains at five years, i.e. the end-date will not be extended, and
- the salary component of the grant will be reduced by a time and an amount commensurate with the period of the career disruption.

Investigator Grants are an integral part of NHMRC's new grant program, which has been designed to provide opportunities to researchers at all career stages. To enable researchers to maintain continuity of research support, the salary component of an Investigator Grant cannot be extended beyond the five year duration of the grant. This

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<sup>1</sup> A prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to pregnancy, major illness/injury or carer responsibilities.



ensures that Investigator Grant holders are eligible to apply for research support through Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes when their RSP ends. For example, Investigator Grant holders may apply for a new Investigator Grant in their fourth or fifth year of funding, or alternatively, they may choose to apply for an Ideas Grant(s) in the fifth year of funding.

NHMRC will actively monitor the outcomes of the new grant program and will continue to seek feedback from the sector to assist in identifying opportunities for improvement.