



Australian Government

National Health and Medical Research Council

Early and mid-career researchers

One of the three aims of NHMRC's new grant program is to "provide opportunities for talented researchers at all career stages to contribute to the improvement of human health". All new schemes under the restructured program can support early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs).

Investigator Grants

Investigator Grants will support talented individuals with an outstanding record of achievement, at all career stages, including EMCRs. The scheme has five levels which are described in the Statement of Expectations. Applicants will self-select which level to apply for based on their consideration of the Statement of Expectations for each level of Investigator Grants and their personal eligibility circumstances.

Track record assessment will take into consideration relative to opportunity, the applicants field of research, and the level at which a researcher has applied, where appropriate. This enables each applicant's track record to be appropriately assessed relative to their peers.

Synergy Grants

Synergy Grants will foster team diversity by supporting outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer major questions that cannot be answered by a single investigator. As outlined for Investigator Grants, track record will be assessed relative to opportunity and the applicant's field of research, and the level at which a researcher has applied. As a researcher's track record will be assessed against their peers, it is possible for a multidisciplinary team of mid-career researchers to be competitive for a Synergy Grant.

Ideas Grants

Ideas Grants, which support focussed innovative research projects addressing a specific question, will provide greater funding opportunities for EMCRs. To ensure that there is emphasis on innovation and creativity in Ideas Grants, NHMRC has developed with input from the innovation working group, a new definition and category descriptors for innovation and creativity. Ideas Grants will have separate criteria for innovation and creativity, and significance that are weighted 25% and 20%, respectively.

In addition, assessment of feasibility is based on the appropriateness of the applicant team and their experience, the resources and access to additional personnel necessary for the project. The absence of track record assessment creates a more even playing field for researchers at all career stages.

Strategic and Leveraging Grants

Strategic and Leveraging Grants will continue to support research that addresses identified national needs and this includes a focus on providing EMCRs with opportunities through a focus on building capacity and capability. For example, Centres of Research Excellence include an assessment criterion 'develop the health and medical research workforce by providing opportunities to advance the training of new researchers, particularly those with a capacity for independent research and future leadership roles'.

Monitoring and Evaluations

NHMRC is developing an evaluation framework that will assist it to monitor and evaluate the new grant program. This evaluation framework will include a focus on considering the new grant program's support for talented researchers at all career stages.