



CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS FUNDING POLICY

for funding commencing in 2011

Call for Applications OPEN: 13 January 2010
Applications CLOSE: 31 March 2010

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1. PURPOSE

The NHMRC Career Development Award scheme aims to:

- help build Australia's capacity for research in all fields of health and medical research, with a particular emphasis on clinical, public health and health service research;
- increase knowledge and support the development of evidence based health policies;
- encourage the growth of knowledge-based industries in Australia by helping to bridge the gap between research and industry and fostering an environment that values industry achievement; and
- provide a vehicle for Australian researchers working overseas to return to Australia to continue their career development.

The awards are available to researchers in the early stages of their careers. The proposed research must:

- be internationally competitive;
- develop their capacity for original independent research;
- develop their research leadership skills; and
- help them to establish themselves as independent self-directed health and medical researchers in a research program or as part of a research team.

The NHMRC Career Development Award scheme is highly competitive. Before commencing an application researchers should carefully consider the Position Classification Statements (Appendix 1), Research Performance Descriptors (Appendix 2) and Selection Criteria (Appendix 3).

2. PRIVACY

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988, which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Act allows.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information contained in applications is regarded as confidential unless otherwise indicated and will be received and treated as confidential by NHMRC. It is a legislated responsibility of all NHMRC staff and Committee members not to disclose to any person confidential information to which they become privy as a result of the exercise of their responsibilities to NHMRC. Information which may be properly regarded as *confidential* should be designated accordingly.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Career Development Award (CDA) Level 1:

Applicants will normally have at least 2 and less than 7 years post-doctoral experience from the date of the letter advising that their doctoral thesis was passed (at the time of the close of applications) unless exceptional circumstances exist (see exceptional circumstances below). Applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research qualification (eg a professional doctorate) may also be eligible to apply.

Career Development Award (CDA) Level 2:

Applicants will normally have more than 7 and less than 12 years post-doctoral experience from the date of the letter advising that their doctoral thesis was passed (at the time of the close of applications) unless exceptional circumstances exist (see exceptional circumstances below). Applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research qualification (eg a professional doctorate) may also be eligible to apply.

General Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate that they will have access to the facilities needed for the proposed research and will be in a research environment that will support their development in accordance with the aims of this award. They must have a mentor who can guide their research and the development of their careers.

With the exception of Industry Awards, all Career Development Awards are to be undertaken in Australia.

Applicants must be Australian citizens, permanent residents or New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category Visa. Applicants who have applied for, but not yet been granted permanent residency or a Special Category Visa, may apply for the award. Evidence of the appropriate status must be provided before the start of the award.

Applications must be submitted through a registered NHMRC Administering Institution.

Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances may include an episode of illness, parental leave, other personal matters or involvement with knowledge transfer of health and medical research. In all cases documentation outlining the exceptional circumstances will be required.

Individuals who have delayed commencing, or had a significant interruption to a research career after a PhD due to involvement in health practice or industry may also apply in the relevant category (CDA1, 2 - < 7 'research active' years or CDA2, > 7 - 12 'research active' years). Such individuals will need to make a strong case regarding the number of years in which they have been 'research active' and also demonstrate that they are on a career development trajectory (and not already established).

Exceptional circumstances would not normally extend to an applicant's choice to seek employment outside of research.

5. CATEGORIES OF AWARD

Categories of award at each CDA Level are listed below. Applicants for any of these awards may also apply for a partnership award (see Section 4).

Note that the highest ranked CDA Level 2 applicant who returns from overseas to take up their CDA will be named the Howard Florey Centenary Career Development Award.

a) Biomedical Career Development Awards

These awards are available for any aspect of biomedical research or fundamental research relevant to health. They are full-time awards and recipients would normally be expected to work full-time on the development of their research careers during the term of the award.

b) Clinical Career Development Awards

Clinical research involves contact with patients or has a direct link to patient outcomes. Applicants must demonstrate medical, paramedical, allied health or public health professional activity. The awards can be full-time or part-time. Part-time awards are for people who wish to maintain an active clinical role but continue to provide clinical care.

The part-time awards are available for 30-70% of a full-time position with the value of the award pro-rated accordingly. Applications for part-time awards must be justified in professional terms. Applicants must plan to combine their clinical duties with their research and be able to demonstrate an interface between the two.

c) Population Health Career Development Awards

These awards are available for public health and health service delivery research.

Awards can be taken full-time or part-time. Part-time awards are available for researchers who want to maintain an active role in the delivery of public health services or the development of public health policy.

Part-time awards are available for 30-70% of a full-time position, with the value of the award pro-rated accordingly. Applications for part-time awards must be justified in professional terms. Applicants must plan to combine their public health or policy development practice work with their research and be able to demonstrate an interface between the two.

d) Industry Career Development Awards

These awards are full time awards and are intended to support researchers with a track record of research excellence and commercial interest to spend between 1 and 2 years of their award research time in an industry placement (in Australia or overseas) followed by the residual proportion at a research institution in Australia. The industry placement need not be taken over a single continuous period, but should provide

maximum exposure to research at the commercial interface. Applicants need to provide clear evidence of engagement with their industry partner.

These awards are designed to support research and development work undertaken in such human health related fields as diagnostics, medical devices, pharmaceutical product development, biotechnology, bioinformatics, biomaterials, biostatistics, disease management systems, organic synthesis, fermentation technologies, manufacturing technologies, clinical trials, toxicology etc.

6. PARTNERSHIP CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

These awards are offered through funding partnerships agreed between NHMRC and each partner organisation. They offer additional opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the concerns and research interests of the partner organisations.

Partnership awards are offered alongside other Career Development Awards. They are not alternative awards. They have the same financial value as the other Career Development Awards.

An application for partnership funding will not affect the evaluation of an application for other Career Development Awards. Applicants who are interested in a partnership award should indicate this by selecting the appropriate option on their Career Development Award application form. Applications for more than one partnership award are acceptable and encouraged if the proposed research will be of interest to more than one partner organisation. Funding partners welcome opportunities to collaborate in supporting mutually beneficial research.

The partnership awards are administered by NHMRC. Applications are assessed and evaluated in the same way as applications for all the other Career Development Awards. The partnership applications are also reviewed by the partner organisations.

A number of partnership arrangements are in place. Information on partners' research interests and priorities may be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/cda/index.htm>

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants must satisfy the following selection criteria:

- Demonstrated research success relative to opportunity in terms of both seniority and field of research with reference to the levels of activity outlined in the classification statement for these positions (Appendix 1);
- Potential for further career development in health and medical research;
- A clear career development strategy;
- Research plans that are consistent with the aims of the award scheme;
- A supportive research environment with the facilities and infrastructure needed to support the proposed research and career development plans.

Applicants who meet the selection criteria are ranked against each other. The ranking will take into account the quality of their past achievements (especially their academic record and any awards and prizes), the quality and impact of their research work, the level of past research funding and the quality of their research proposal and proposed research environment. More detailed guidance on the application of these parameters is set out in the research performance descriptors at Appendix 2.

The CDA selection criteria and scoring matrix is at Appendix 3.

8. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

NHMRC will establish peer review panels to assess all applications, taking into account the purpose and aims of the Career Development Award scheme, selection criteria, position classification statement (Appendix 1) and performance descriptors (Appendix 2).

The peer review panels will rank applications in each category. These rankings are provided to NHMRC which seeks advice from NHMRC Research Committee and Council on the extent and balance of CDAs in accordance with NHMRC objectives and available funding.

In addition NHMRC is committed to developing career paths for Indigenous Australians in health research and researchers conducting research in Indigenous health fields across all its “People Support” programs (Post-Doctoral Training Fellowships, Career Development Awards, Research and Practitioner Fellowships and Post-Graduate Scholarships). In addition to standard assessment of research output, contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and representation on key committees will be recognised as legitimate contributions to track record.

Removal of Applications

NHMRC reserves the right to remove from further consideration applications that are clearly non-competitive or ineligible. Exclusion of ineligible applications may take place at any time during the selection process under the following circumstances:

- the application is inconsistent with the objectives of the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (the Act) and the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (refer to Sections 3 and 51 of the Act);
- the application contravenes or is inconsistent with this policy and the relevant guides for the completion of application forms;
- the application was not submitted through the appropriate Research Office or Chief Executive Officer of an NHMRC approved Administering Institution;
- the application includes any false or misleading information; and/or
- the application is incomplete.

Withdrawal of Applications

Applicants may withdraw an application at any time by notifying NHMRC through their RAO.

More detailed information on the peer review and ranking process can be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/cda/index.htm>

9. TERMS & CONDITIONS OF AWARD

Both levels of Career Development are four-year awards. Neither level of the award is renewable, however, a holder of a CDA Level 1 may apply for a CDA Level 2.

The award payments include salary, salary on-costs (payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation etc), maintenance and travel. Successful applicants are required to negotiate the allocation of funds with their employing institution.

Note: for applicants relocating from overseas, an amount up to \$5,000 from the award may be used to assist with relocation costs.

For awards beginning in 2011, the annual payment for the first year is:

- CDA Level 1 - \$96,040; and
- CDA Level 2 - \$106,230.

Annual indexation may be applied in subsequent years.

Applicants for CDAs are generally expected to be working full-time on the development of their careers. Biomedical and Industry awards are available for full-time research, however, Clinical and Population Health awards are available for full-time or part-time research. Part-time researchers may spend between 30% and 70% of their time on clinical or other related professional work with the balance on research.

For part-time awards, payments are adjusted pro-rata to the level of the part-time award. The applicant's employer (e.g. hospital or government agency) is expected to fund the balance of the applicant's time. If the employer's support is withdrawn, the award will terminate unless there is support from another employer for the remaining term of the award. Applicants for part-time awards must submit a written undertaking from their employer confirming that they have an appropriate and complementary salaried position for the period of the award.

If a recipient of a CDA is unable to work full-time because of personal reasons, it is possible to apply to NHMRC for leave. Applications for full or part-time leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The applicant's administering institution must agree to the leave and support the application. The requested leave must not exceed a total of one year of full-time equivalent work and the applicant must still be able to achieve the research objectives. The period of the award may be extended for up to one year to offset the leave but there will be no change in the value of the award.

Maternity leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the administering institution.

All grants must be administered by an NHMRC registered Administering Institution under a Deed of Agreement for NHMRC Researcher Support Schemes. A copy of this deed is available at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admin/deeds.htm>

Institutions can apply to NHMRC for registration as an administering institution. The application form is available through NHMRC web site at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/policy/admininst.htm>

Approval to become an administering institution is subject to NHMRC guidelines.

10. REPORTING

Administering Institution Reporting Requirements

Institutions are responsible for ensuring that the following reports are submitted to NHMRC by their due dates:

- Annual financial reports;
- Mid-term progress reports; and
- Final reports
- Final Acquittal

NHMRC reserves the right to suspend further payments for any current Career Development Awards until the appropriate reports have been received and assessed as satisfactory.

CDA Recipient Reporting Requirements

All CDA recipients are required to submit these documents to NHMRC, through their RAO:

- Mid-Term report: a report is to be submitted in accordance with the Deed of Agreement. Information may be obtained from: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admin/cda.htm>
- Final report: a report is to be submitted in accordance with the Deed of Agreement. This may be obtained from: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admin/progreport.htm>

11. APPLYING FOR A CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD

The Advice and Instructions to Applicants and supporting material is available on NHMRC website at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/cda/index.htm>

12. OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The NHMRC policy on complaints can be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/contact/complaint.htm>

Objections

Applicants may lodge an objection to the outcome of the peer review process. The objection must be lodged in writing through the Administering Institution's Research Office and be received within four weeks of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of the application.

The objection should be directed to the Complaints Officer at:

Complaints Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or via email to: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC will provide a written response to all objections.

The *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) provides for the Commissioner not to investigate a complaint where the complainant has not initially approached the CEO for resolution.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge a formal complaint with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints, as detailed in Part 8 of the NHMRC Act.

The NHMRC Act may be found at:

[http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/23029FDD3FCC3FD7CA25719C008331D3/\\$file/NatHeaMedResCou1992WD02.pdf](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/23029FDD3FCC3FD7CA25719C008331D3/$file/NatHeaMedResCou1992WD02.pdf)

Formal complaints to the Commissioner of Complaints

Complaints to the Commissioner should be addressed to:

Dr Kerry Breen
NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The complaint must be in writing, be signed by the complainant, describe the action complained about and specify the nature of and grounds for the complaint.

Complaints can only be considered against administrative process and not the merits of a particular decision. The grounds of Complaint are detailed at section 58 of the NHMRC Act and are listed below.

- a) that the action involved a breach of the rules of natural justice;
- b) that the action was induced or affected by fraud;
- c) that there was no evidence or other material to justify the action;
- d) that an irrelevant consideration was taken into account in relation to the action;
- e) that a relevant consideration was not taken into account in relation to the action;
- f) that in the course of the action a discretionary power was exercised for a purpose other than the purpose for which the power is conferred;
- g) that the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in bad faith;
- h) that, in the course of the action, a personal discretionary power was exercised at the direction of another person;
- i) that the action involved the exercise of a discretionary power in accordance with a rule or policy without regard to the merits of the particular case; or
- j) that the action involved any other exercise of a power in a way that constitutes abuse of the power.

APPENDIX 1 - POSITION CLASSIFICATION STATEMENTS

The Position Classification Statements set out broad outlines of baseline activity and achievements expected of applicants within the levels of the NHMRC Career Development Awards Scheme. In coming to decisions about the relative merit of applicants for these positions, assessors will take into account research track record of these baseline activities against opportunity. Applicants should also note the attached Research Performance Descriptors (Appendix 2) which identify quality of research and associated outcomes. The list of Research Performance Descriptors is meant to be indicative rather than exhaustive.

CDA Level 1

General Standard

Career Development Award Level 1 recipients are expected to carry out independent and/or team research and activities that will develop their expertise in biomedical, clinical and/or public health or health service delivery research. They may work with support, guidance and/or direction from more senior colleagues in establishing their research careers.

Activities

Activities expected of a Career Development Award Level 1 recipient include:

- The conduct of research either as a member of a team or independently;
- The presentation of research data at conferences and seminars;
- The production of or contribution to high quality research publications in peer-reviewed literature or through other appropriate forms of research dissemination (eg official government reports);
- Supervision of research support staff involved in the research;
- Guiding the research work of junior members of research staff;
- Co-supervision, or where appropriate supervision of major honours or postgraduate research projects within the field of research;
- Contribution to the preparation of, or where appropriate individual preparation of research proposal submissions to external funding bodies;
- Involvement in professional activities including attendance at conferences and seminars in the field of expertise, and contributions to policy development for professional bodies’;
- Administrative functions primarily connected with their area of research;
- Occasional contributions to the teaching program within the field of the individual's research; and
- Attendance at meetings associated with research or the work of the organisational unit to which the research is connected.

Past Performance

The recipient of a Career Development Award Level 1 will normally have:

- relevant doctoral or other relevant research qualifications in health and medical disciplines;
- research experience in health and medical disciplines;

- evidence of original intellectual input into research;
- research output (publications, conference papers, reports, professional or technical contributions) which provide evidence of research ability and potential for future development; and
- involvement in appropriate professional activities.

CDA Level 2

General Standard

Career Development Award Level 2 recipients are expected to carry out research independently or as part of a research team. They are expected to work independently, with limited guidance or direction from more senior colleagues in establishing their research careers.

Activities

Activities expected of a Career Development Award Level 2 recipient include:

- *Supervision of research support staff involved in the research;
- *Guiding the research work of junior members of research staff in his/her research area;
- *Co-supervision, or where appropriate supervision of major honours or postgraduate research projects within the field of research;
- *Co-financial management of grants;
- The conduct of research either as a member of a team or independently;
- The presentation of research data at conferences and seminars;
- Contribution to the preparation of, or where appropriate individual preparation of research proposal submissions to external funding bodies;
- Involvement in professional activities including attendance at conferences and seminars in the field of expertise and contributions to government or professional bodies policy development;
- Administrative functions primarily connected with his/her area of research;
- Occasional contributions in the teaching program within the field of the individual's research; and
- Attendance at meetings associated with research or the work of the organisational unit to which the research is connected.

Past Performance

The recipient of a Career Development Award Level 2 will normally have:

- *evidence of original intellectual input into research;
- research output (publications, conference papers, reports, professional or technical contributions) which provide evidence of research ability and potential for future development;
- *involvement in appropriate professional activities;
- *evidence of local and national recognition for research;
- relevant doctoral or other relevant research qualifications in health and medical disciplines; and
- research experience in health and medical disciplines;

*Items marked with asterisks indicate an area in which a significant increment would be expected when compared with the CDA Level 1.

APPENDIX 2 - RESEARCH PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS

NHMRC Career Development Award Researcher

These performance descriptors are supplied to help applicants describe their research performance and outcomes. The list is an indicative one rather than exhaustive. Applicants may choose to provide other information on their performance. In general, the lower numbered descriptors can be regarded as an indication of more significant research results or higher levels of achievement. However, opportunity, discipline and overall contributions to research will also be taken into account.

A. PUBLICATIONS

In describing their research performance and outcomes, applicants should assess their work in relation to the following categories of publication and their contribution to publications with more than one author.

- 1) *Seminal contributions with impact beyond the specific:*
 - a) biomedical publications in top-ranked general scientific journals;
 - b) publications with objective evidence of a paradigm shift or methodological advance that are exceptional for the field; and
 - c) enduring scientific contributions or technical reports that are continue to shape research inquiry in the discipline.
- 2) *Specialised contributions to knowledge:*
 - a) biomedical publications in first-rate specialty-based journals;
 - b) clinical publications that usefully corroborate or extend previous insights to make a unique contribution to Australian knowledge; and
 - c) technical reports describing new approaches to data collection, surveillance, analysis or use in public health/ health services research, most likely unique to Australia.
- 3) *Research sustaining the knowledge base of the discipline:*
 - a) peer-reviewed publications in local journals describing research of unique importance to Australia but largely derivative of global developments;
 - b) biomedical publications in lower-ranked journals.

B. GRANTS

Applicants should explain their role in obtaining multi-investigator grants and indicate the numbers and categories of grants that support their research.

1. Major international grants (NIH, Howard Hughes, Human Frontiers, WHO etc.).
2. Major national grants (NHMRC, CRC or grants from Biotech or Pharma).
3. National grants from specialist agencies (Cancer Councils, NHF, etc).
4. Grants from other sources (eg grants from employing institutions).

C. PEER RECOGNITION: INVITATIONS TO SPEAK

1. Plenary Session at major international meeting; Chairman of International Policy Group; Member of Editorial Board, international top ranked generalist journal.
2. Invited Speaker at Major International Meeting; Invited member of International Policy Group; Member of Editorial Board, international specialist journal.
3. Invited Speaker at Major National Meeting; Chairman or member of major National Health Policy Advisory Group (eg NHMRC); Member of Editorial Board, local specialist journal.
4. Other speaking invitations (eg invited seminars), committee or board memberships.

D. PRIZES AND AWARDS

1. International Prizes.
2. National Prizes.
3. State or Institutional Prizes.

E. RESEARCH TRANSLATION

1) *Commercialisation*

- a) IP developed in long-term and major collaboration with Biotech or Pharma or through founding a start-up or interaction with WHO etc.
- b) IP developed in small-scale collaboration with Biotech or Pharma.
- c) Consultant, scientific board member etc.
- d) Patents lodged and maintained but little evidence of commercial development.

2) *Clinical Activities*

- a) Leadership of large multi-centre clinical trial, crucial advocate for changes in clinical practice based on clinical trial evidence; initiation through to implementation of clinical practice guidelines; initiation through to completion of major change to evaluation of clinical practice, eg national disease register; other recognised national contribution to policy and health service development.
- b) Key and consistent but not lead role in clinical trial research (less involved in dialogue with health care providers to be aware of evidence) e.g. state rather than national role; member but not chair of clinical guidelines committee, contributor to health policy and health services development.
- c) Specific and necessary but minor contribution to design of clinical trial, local advocate and successful change agent for clinical practice audit or other non-experimental research designs; emerging profile in prestigious health forums.
- d) Participation in college, society or health care facility committees; emerging profile in health policy forums.

3) *Public Health Activities*

- a) Leadership role in design, conduct, publication and advocacy for policy and practice of seminal research; key responsibility for changes in concept, practice or priority of research implications; initiator through to implementation of a new system of data collection and organisational feedback e.g. population-based data collections, other recognised national contribution to public health policy and practice; constructive and effective change agent in a public health discipline.
- b) Key but not lead role in design, conduct, publication and advocacy of the implications of seminal research; key and consistent but not lead role in reform of public health policy/practice.
- c) Consistent contribution to health policy and practice but not necessarily in own recognised field of research; emerging profile in prestigious public health policy forums.
- d) Advocacy of translation of public health evidence into policy or practice; local practitioner; modest participation in local public or private health sector governance.

F. CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH TRAINING

1. Primary supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions.
2. Jointly supervised PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions.
3. Supervision, joint supervision of PhD candidates.
4. Successful completions of Science Honours candidates, and other research project higher degree candidates.
5. Training of postdoctoral staff.
6. Training of general research staff.

G. CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Major peer review committee, Chair.
2. Member of peer review committee or panels or similar.
3. Review of scientific manuscripts (in relation to the type of journals).
4. Review of grant and other research applications.

H. INDUSTRY

1. Track record of research excellence and commercial achievements.
2. Scientific and commercial merit of the proposed research.
3. Evidence of a significant interest in the commercialisation of research.

APPENDIX 3 - SELECTION CRITERIA AND SCORING MATRIX

Criteria	Points
Applicant's track record (taking into account different research paths and opportunities), the quality and number of publications, the quality of the publishing journals and the role as an author.	30
Potential for a future high level research career.	5
Quality of the applicant's career development strategy	5
Quality of the research proposal, taking into account interface with the goals of the CDA scheme.	5
Quality of the research environment and, for Industry applicants, the Industry Partner.	5
TOTAL	50

Total 50 points