

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

ACCREDITATION OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES March 2004

Introduction

Health and Medical Research Institutes are an important part of the Australian health and medical research effort. More than one-third of NHMRC-supported research now occurs in health and medical research institutes.

In recent years, the NHMRC has accredited those Institutes that have independent status. These Institutes are outside the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) higher education sector (and thus not eligible for DEST infrastructure support), and operate under independent Boards of Management (or equivalent). Many of the independent Institutes have received recognition by State Governments, being provided with State funds for infrastructure and/or capital building works. The independent Institutes are subject, in general, to different taxation arrangements to universities and other research organisations, such as the CSIRO.

The current accreditation program for independent Institutes has been running since 1995 and was reviewed in 1999 by the Research Committee, which prepared a draft, revised policy for comment, by the research and wider community. Subsequently community input has been incorporated into the new policy.

The Research Committee is aware that there are a number of additional high quality health and medical research institutes that did not meet **all** the former criteria for accreditation. These Institutes are, in general, part of larger administrative structures, usually a university, hospital or professional organisation. They may be eligible for infrastructure support and other assistance through the host organisation and their staff are ultimately responsible to the host organisation as their employer. The NHMRC wishes to recognise the contribution of these institutes to Australian health and medical research by allowing them to become eligible for accreditation, while maintaining a distinction between them and those institutes that are independent of such support systems, and who are responsible directly for their own activities.

The independent Institutes should be acknowledged as existing without receiving direct infrastructure support from a host organisation. Through their efforts, they bring additional support to health and medical research in Australia. Increasingly, the State Governments recognise this independence by providing a level of infrastructure support, which for university-based institutes is generally available through DEST mechanisms. In formulating the new policy, the NHMRC was motivated to ensure fairness in the distribution of research support, both by NHMRC and other research funding agencies.

The NHMRC is motivated also by the need to ensure that all institutions meet the necessary standards to ensure that they are able to administer public funds properly and that they follow appropriate procedures and have sufficient resources to support the performance of NHMRC funded research.

POLICY

The Purpose of NHMRC Accreditation of Research Institutes

1. To recognise the high quality of research undertaken by staff employed by, or associated directly with, the Institute, and that appropriate research practices are in place.
2. To recognise that the Institute has in place appropriate governance, management and operational procedures for the proper management of public monies.
3. To assist the Institute and funding bodies in determining the potential eligibility of the Institute for support from various forms of infrastructure funding.

Expected Outcomes of Accreditation

1. To allow an Institute to advise that it has been accredited by NHMRC, to assist it in its own efforts to increase the profile and funding level for health and medical research through that Institute.
2. To assure policy makers and funding bodies, including Government, that an Institute follows relevant and appropriate policies and practices for the management of public monies.
3. To inform other funding bodies about the status of an Institute.

NOTE: the NHMRC accepts no responsibility for the use by an Institute of its accredited status for the above purposes.

Under the NHMRC policy the NHMRC will accredit an Institute on the basis of the quality of research undertaken by staff of the institute (refer criterion 3) and adherence to specific policies for scientific conduct and for the ethical conduct of human and animal research.

If they wish, Institutes which are **fully independent** and which have in place appropriate policies and procedures relating to governance, management and operations will be allowed to incorporate the term “ACCREDITED BY THE NHMRC AS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE” into their advertising, stationery and business interactions and will be accepted as an administering institution for the purpose of applying for and administering NHMRC research grants. Institutes that are **not fully independent** will be allowed to incorporate the term “ACCREDITED BY THE NHMRC” into their advertising, stationery and business interactions.

It is expected that, under current Commonwealth Government policy, accredited, independent Institutes would not be eligible to receive DEST infrastructure support and that eligibility for DEST infrastructure for other accredited Institutes would be dependent on the host institution being recognised as a higher education institution.

Criteria for NHMRC Accreditation

To be eligible to become an **Accredited Institute**, the Institute must:

1. Operate as a separate research institution or organisation, with a name distinct from that of any host institution.
2. Be established for the conduct of health and medical research; such objects shall be written into the organisation’s Constitution or Articles of Association.
3. Be able to demonstrate that staff employed by the Institute, or individuals associated directly with the Institute, hold combined research funding of at least \$1,000,000 from

peer reviewed sources based on a running average of the last three years, including at least one project or program grant from NHMRC. [Refer to list of recognised sources at Attachment A.] Note that the list is not exhaustive and that NHMRC will consider the recognition of overseas and other Australian, competitive, peer reviewed funding sources on a case by case basis.]

4. Have written policies to ensure adherence to the “NHMRC/AVCC Joint Statement on Research Practice”, the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans”, the “Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes”, the “NHMRC Policy on the Care and Use of Non-Human Primates for Scientific Purposes” and the “NHMRC/CHFA Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research” and other relevant NHMRC policies regarding research practices (as appropriate).

NHMRC will not grant accreditation until **all** the criteria numbered 1-4 above are met.

Criteria for NHMRC Accreditation as an Independent Research Institute

Independent Institutes are those which are not accountable directly to another institution, but which operate as an independent entity, both financially and legally, have an independent Board of Management and employ staff who are accountable to an appropriate Director or Chief Executive Officer.

In addition to fulfilling the general criteria (1-4), an **Accredited Independent Research Institute** must:

Governance

5. Operate as a research institution, established by an Act of Parliament or by incorporation under the Corporations Law.
6. Operate as an independent entity, and not be directly accountable to another organisation or organisations.
7. Have its own Board of Management on which no university, hospital or any other identifiable group or organisation has a majority representation.

Management

8. Have a Director/Chief Executive Officer of Institute, who is accountable only to the Board of Management of the Institute.
9. Directly employ the staff of the Institute who are accountable for research only to the Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Institute.
10. Be responsible for the administration of any competitive, peer reviewed research grants awarded to staff of the Institute.
11. Own or have secure tenancy arrangements for the premises in which the Institute’s research is conducted.
12. Maintain and publish audited Annual Accounts in accordance with the relevant Act relating to incorporation.

Operation:

13. Have affiliation agreements with a university and/or a hospital (or other institution providing health services).

14. Have significant intellectual interaction with the affiliated, or other, hospitals/health care institutions through research and/or teaching and/or health practice.
15. Have significant intellectual interaction with the affiliated, or other, university(s), through research and/or teaching.

NHMRC will not grant accreditation as an independent research institute until **all** the criteria numbered 1-15 above are met.

Duration

Accreditation will be granted normally for a 3-year period. The NHMRC reserves the right to clarify or verify any aspect of the accreditation. It reserves the right to withdraw accreditation at any time, upon establishment of evidence that accreditation criteria are not being met.

Application Process

An Institute applying for accreditation should write to the Secretary of the NHMRC Research Committee, MDP 33, GPO BOX 9848, Canberra, ACT 2601, requesting accreditation and providing:

- a declaration that the Institute meets one or both of the following sets of criteria for accreditation as either an accredited Institute or as an accredited independent research Institute; and
- a copy of the Institute's most recent Annual Report.

Appropriate officers of the Institute and the host institution (as appropriate) must sign the declaration of assessment against the criteria. A [proforma](#) declaration is provided at Attachment B.

Institutes seeking NHMRC Accreditation as an Independent Research Institute and that are not currently a registered NHMRC Administering Institution should also include an application for NHMRC Administering Institution status. Details regarding NHMRC Administering Institutions is available on the NHMRC web site at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research/policy.pdf>.

Review of application decisions

An Institute for which an application for accreditation as an Accredited Institute or as an Accredited Independent Research Institute has been refused, may seek a review of this decision.

Appeals may be based only on the grounds that the decision was: (1) arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise not in accordance with the *NHMRC Accreditation of Health and Medical Research Institutes Policy – March 2004*, or (2) not supported by substantial evidence.

The information upon which an appeal is based must be material that pertained to the application at the time of lodgment. New information, based on data subsequent to the initial application will not be considered. If substantial changes have occurred subsequent to the initial application, the Institution should submit these changes as part of a new application for accreditation, rather than as part of a request for reconsideration.

Appeal Criteria

An appeal for reconsideration must:

- be in writing;
- be addressed to the Chair of NHMRC Research Committee within 30 days of receipt of the letter of notification of the adverse decision;
- describe the action complained about;
- specify the nature of and grounds for the complaint;
- be signed by the Head of Institution; and be and mailed to:

The Secretary
Research Committee
Centre for Research Management
Office of NHMRC (MDP 33)
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA 2601

All appeals will be acknowledged by NHMRC upon receipt and referred to Council for consideration.

**LIST OF FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
AUSTRALIAN COMPETITIVE GRANTS REGISTER (ACGR)
Grants Paid in 2002**

COMMONWEALTH SCHEMES (BY PORTFOLIO)

Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry - Australia

Australian Pork Ltd
Cotton R&D Corporation Research Grants
Dairy R&D Corporation Competitive Grants
Fisheries R&D Corporation
Forest and Wood Products R&D Corporation
Grains R&D Corporation
Grape and Wine R&D Corporation Competitive Grants Scheme
Horticulture Australia Ltd
Land and Water Australia
Meat and Livestock Australia Research Program
Rural Industries R&D Corporation
Sugar Research & Development Corporation

Attorney-General's

Criminology Research Fund

Australian Greenhouse Office

Renewable Energy Commercialisation Program

Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

ICT Centre for Excellence
Telecommunication Research Grants

Defence

Army History Research Grants Scheme

Education, Science and Training

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies - Research Grants
Australian National Training Authority - VET Research Centres
Australian Research Council

- Indigenous Researchers Development Scheme
- International Researcher Exchange (IREX) Scheme
- Key Centres for Teaching & Research
- Large Research Grants Scheme
- Research Fellowships Scheme
- Special Research Centres
- Strategic Partnerships with Industry - Research and Training (SPIRT) Scheme
- Discovery

- Projects (including Research Fellowships)
- Federation Fellowships
- Indigenous Researchers' Development
- Linkage
 - Projects (including Fellowships and Postgraduate Awards)
 - International
 - Centres of Excellence
- Children's Literacy National Projects (CLP)
- Grants for National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies Project Programme – Strategic Research Projects Only
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER)
 - National Managed Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program
 - Adult Literary Research Program

Environment and Heritage

- Australian Antarctic Science Grants
- Australian Biological Resources Study Participatory Program
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority - Augmentative Reef Research Grants

Foreign Affairs and Trade

- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) – R&D Development Projects

Health and Ageing

- Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC)
 - Priority Driven Research Program
- Commonwealth AIDS Research Grants (CARG)
 - CARG Project Grants
 - CARG Fellowships
 - CARG National Centres in HIV Research
 - CARG Collaborating Centres to the National Centres in HIV Research
 - ANCAHRD Commissioned Research Grants
- Cochrane Collaborative Groups' Funding Scheme
- General Practice Evaluation Program (GPEP)
- National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF)
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
 - Project Grants
 - Program, Unit, Centre and Institute Grants
 - Training Fellows
 - Health Research Partnerships
 - Program in Medical Genomics
 - Research Fellowships
 - Practitioner Fellowships
 - Career Development Awards
 - Burnet Awards
 - Capacity Building Grants in Population Health Research
 - Development Grants
 - Industry Research Fellowships
 - Special Program Grants in Type 1 Diabetes
 - International Collaborative Research Grants Schemes (funding to commence in 2003)
 - Health and Economics Research

- Translation Grants In Injury
- Youth Suicide Prevention
- National Illicit Drugs Strategy
 - Treatment of Drug Dependencies
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Communities
- Electromagnetic Energy Research
- Centre for Clinical Excellence in Hospital Based Research
- Centres for Clinical Research Excellence
- Social and Behavioural Research into Hepatitis C
- Otitis Media in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Diabetes and Related Disorders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Mental Health
 - Effect of Early Psychosis Intervention Programs
 - Service Evaluation
- Ageing Research
 - Scoping Study on Ageing Research
 - Health Ageing Research Program
- Systems of Care for Chronic Disease
- Palliative Care
 - Targeted Research
 - Short Study
 - Nausea
- Oral Health

Industry, Science and Resources

Veterans' Affairs

Health and Medical Research Grants

NON-COMMONWEALTH SCHEMES

Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation Ltd – Research Grants
 Australian Coal Association Research Program (ACARP)
 Australian Dental Research Foundation Grants
 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Research Funding Scheme
 Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering (AINSE) Grants (direct grants)
 Australian Kidney Foundation - Project Grants
 Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists – Research Funding Scheme
 Australian Rotary Health Research Fund
 The Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundations
 Coal Services Pty Ltd (formerly) Joint Coal Board Health and Safety Trust
 Diabetes Australia Research Trust (DART)
 Dust Disease Board Research Grants Scheme
 Financial Markets Foundation for Children Grants
 Garnett Passe and Rodney Williams Memorial Foundation

- Grants-in-aid
- Overseas Research Fellowships
- Project Grants
- Research Training Fellowships in Otorhinolaryngology
- Senior/Principal Research Fellowships

 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Grants
 MBF Health Research Awards – Research Project Grants

National Breast Cancer Foundation - Kathleen Cunningham Research Grants
National Heart Foundation of Australia
- Grants-In-Aid for Research (Biomedical and Education/Health Promotion)
- Postdoctoral Fellowships
National Institute of Clinical Studies – Targeted Grants
National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Australia - Projects Grants and Postdoctoral Fellowships
Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia (ORIA)
Pharmacy Guild of Australia - Investigator Initiated Projects
Pfizer Pty Ltd
- Cardiovascular Lipid Research Grants (CVL)
- Neuroscience Research Grants (NSR)

The above list is not exhaustive. The NHMRC will consider the recognition of overseas and other Australian, competitive, peer reviewed funding sources on a case by case basis.

The above list of recognised funding sources have been selected from the DEST list of funding schemes for Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR). The NHMRC list does **not** include the Smoking and Health Research Foundation (formerly known as the Tobacco Research and Development Council).

The DEST list of funding schemes for the Australian Competitive Grants Register can be found at the following URL: <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/fund/internal/RIBG/acgr2002.pdf>

NATIONAL HEALTH & MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
DECLARATION FOR ACCREDITATION AS AN
NHMRC ACCREDITED INSTITUTE
OR
NHMRC ACCREDITED INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

GENERAL

On behalf of the [name of institute] _____,
we make the following declaration.

We acknowledge that the NHMRC may seek verification of any aspect of this declaration,
and affirm that all relevant documents will be made available to the NHMRC upon request.

We acknowledge that the NHMRC may withdraw accreditation at any time, if there is
evidence that the institute does not fulfil the requirements for accreditation. Before doing so,
the NHMRC will inform the institute in writing of its intention, and the grounds upon which it
proposes to take this action.

Address for correspondence:

Signature:

Director Chair of Board of Management
(or equivalent)

Name:

Director Chair of Board of Management
(or equivalent)

Date: _____ Date: _____

ABN: _____

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

(The signatories to this declaration should initial each applicable criterion.)

1. Name of Institute

2. The Institute is established primarily for the conduct of health and/or medical research.
3. Staff employed by the Institute, or individuals associated directly with the Institute, hold combined research funding of at least \$1,000,000 from peer reviewed sources based on a running average of the last three years, including at least one project or program grant from NHMRC.
4. Have written policies to ensure adherence to the "NHMRC/AVCC Joint Statement on Research Practice", the "National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans", the "Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes", the "NHMRC Policy on the Care and Use of Non-Human Primates for Scientific Purposes" and the "NHMRC/CHFA Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research" and other relevant NHMRC policies regarding research practices (as appropriate).

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION AS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

5. This research institute has been established to operate under the name

_____ by:

- an Act of Parliament;
- incorporation under the Corporations Law;

Please specify the Act or date of incorporation:

6. The Institute, and its staff, as defined in official Institute documents and publications, is not accountable to another organisation or organisations, but operates as an independent entity, both financially and legally.
7. The Institute has a Board of Management (or equivalent) upon which no university, hospital or any other group or organisation has majority representation.
8. Have a Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Institute, who is accountable only to the Board of Management of the Institute.

9. The Institute directly employs staff who are accountable for research only to the Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Institute.
10. The Institute is responsible for the administration of any competitive, peer reviewed research projects awarded to staff of the Institute.
11. The Institute owns, or has secure tenancy arrangements for, the premises in which it conducts research.
12. The Institute maintains and publishes audited Annual Accounts in accordance with the relevant Act relating to incorporation.
13. The Institute has **formal** arrangements with the following universities and/or hospitals (or other institutions providing health services).
Please specify and give details:

14. The Institute has significant intellectual interaction with one or more hospitals/health care institutions through research and/or teaching and/or health practice.
15. The Institute has significant intellectual interaction with its affiliated or other universities through research and/or teaching.

Signed: _____

Director/Chief Executive Officer
Date: ____/____/____

Head of host institution (e.g., Vice-Chancellor), for Institute seeking accreditation
NOT as an Independent Institute.

Date: ____/____/____

OR

Chair of the Board of Management, for Institute seeking accreditation as an
Independent Research Institute.

Date: ____/____/____