

Appendix A: Submitting Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Grant Variations for MRFF grants administered by NHMRC

MRFF grants administered by NHMRC are managed under the [MRFF Grant Variation Policy](#). Variation requests for MRFF grants will be considered within the scope of the MRFF Grant Variation Policy and advice included within this appendix. This appendix will be subject to regular review by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the Department).

RAOs and Grantees should refer to the MRFF Grant Variation Policy, this appendix, the grant agreement and MRFF grant schedule, and the relevant grant opportunity guidelines before submitting a variation request.

RAOs and Grantees should note the possibility that variation requests involving the movement of MRFF funds across financial years may not be possible without loss of some grant funding, depending on the availability of funds to accommodate any revisions to payment schedules in the relevant financial years.

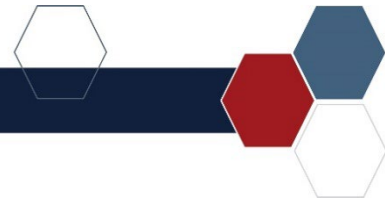
Variation requests must be certified and submitted by the administering MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO to the NHMRC at least one month before the proposed date of effect. Requests for variations with retrospective effect will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

Grantees should direct questions to their RAO in the first instance. The RAO may then contact NHMRC if further advice is needed.

Variation Process:

The grant variation process involves the following steps:

1. The CIA creates, completes, certifies and submits the grant variation request to their MRFF Eligible Organisation's RAO using NHMRC's grants management system (Sapphire).
2. The RAO from the administering MRFF Eligible Organisation reviews the request and certifies and submits the grant variation request to NHMRC in Sapphire. The MRFF Eligible Organisation must maintain a record of, and keep, any relevant supporting documentation.
3. The request is considered by the relevant Delegate. Additional information may be sought from the RAO to inform the Delegate's decision. The final decision to approve or reject a variation request is at the sole discretion of the Delegate.
4. NHMRC notifies the RAO by email of the Delegate's decision.
5. If the variation request is approved, the grant information in Sapphire will be updated to reflect the details of the approved variation (e.g. Grant Period dates, reporting milestones, and/or budgets, as required). A revised schedule will be issued only if the variation involves transferring the grant to a different MRFF Eligible Organisation. Note that changes to the Grant Period will only be made in calendar month blocks of time.



6. If the variation request is not approved, the RAO will be asked to confirm in writing that the grant will continue as originally awarded or as previously approved.

Submitting a variation

Guidance on how to submit a grant variation request in Sapphire is available on the [Sapphire Help page](#) (written instructions) and in the [Sapphire Knowledge Base](#) (video tutorial).

Additional information on requesting variations to MRFF grants is provided below. Grantees should read this information in conjunction with the [MRFF Grant Variation Policy](#).

1. Defer grant commencement date

Defer grant commencement date variations should be requested using the 'Defer Commencement Date' variation type in Sapphire.

MRFF grants are expected to commence on the commencement date specified in the MRFF grant schedule. This variation type should be used where a grant schedule has been executed but grant activities and expenditure have not commenced on the grant.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- number of months for deferral
- detailed justification for the proposed change.

RAOs and Grantees should note that grant payments will continue to be paid as per the relevant grant schedule, and Eligible Organisations will be required to manage the flow of funds in accordance with the varied arrangements.

2. Defer an in-progress grant

Defer an in-progress grant variations should be requested using the 'Defer-in-Progress' variation type in Sapphire.

This variation type should be used where a grant schedule has been executed and the grant activities and/or expenditure have commenced on the grant.

The information required for this variation type includes:

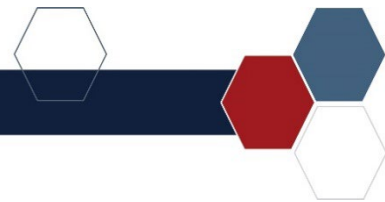
- proposed date of effect
- number of months for deferral
- detailed justification for the proposed change.

3. Extend end date

Extend end date variations should be requested using the 'Extend End Date' variation type in Sapphire.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- number of months for extension
- detailed justification for the proposed change.



4. Relinquish grant

Relinquish grant variations should be requested using the 'Relinquish Grant' variation type in Sapphire.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- proposed date of effect
- detailed justification for the proposed change.

The RAO must hold evidence that all CIs have been notified of the proposed relinquishment.

5. Transfer administering organisation

Transferring administering organisation variations should be requested using the 'Transfer Administering Institution' variation type in Sapphire.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- proposed date of effect
- new administering organisation (must be an approved MRFF Eligible Organisation)
- reason for the proposed transfer
- confirmation from the new administering organisation that it accepts the administering responsibilities for the grant. Note that the relinquishing RAO will need to obtain this confirmation from the new administering organisation and upload it with the variation request.

Where the Delegate approves a request to transfer the administering organisation on a grant:

- the relinquishing administering organisation advises the new administering organisation of the value of any unspent funds
- the new administering organisation invoices the relinquishing administering organisation for the value of the unspent funds
- the relinquishing administering organisation pays the invoice raised by the new administering organisation
- NHMRC issues a revised grant schedule to the new administering organisation for acceptance (this may occur before the transfer of funds between organisations)
- the relinquishing administering organisation submits the Transfer Acquittal statement to NHMRC disclosing the unspent funds to be paid/that have been paid to the new administering organisation.

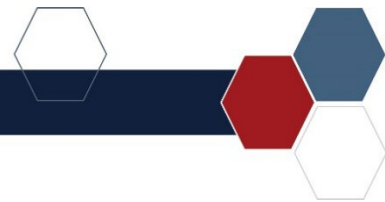
Note that NHMRC will not commence making payments to the new administering organisation until the new grant schedule is accepted in NHMRC's grants management system.

A list of approved MRFF Eligible Organisations can be found on [NHMRC's website](#) (see 'Download' section).

6. Change to grant activity

Change to grant activity variations should be requested using the 'Change to Research Plan' variation type in Sapphire.

The 'Change in Research Plan' variation type should also be used for:



- proposing the addition or removal of a Partner Organisation
- proposing changes to mandatory Other Contributions required to be provided and spent as outlined in the application
- proposing changes in expenditure (see '9. Change to expenditure, including overseas expenditure' below).

As indicated in the MRFF Grant Variation Policy, requests to vary the grant activity will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- details of exceptional circumstances
- details of how the proposed change will affect the completion of the grant
- details of how the proposed change still meets the objectives and outcomes of the grant as outlined in the assessed application. Grantees should refer to Section 1.3 of the grant opportunity guidelines under which the grant was awarded, as well as the MRFF Measures of Success (if applicable)
- *where Commonwealth Commercialisation clauses apply as indicated in the grant schedule*, indication of whether the proposed change will affect the Commercialisation Plan
- proposed date of effect.

7. Change to personnel

Change to personnel variations should be requested using the 'Change to Chief Investigators' and 'Change to Associate Investigators' variation types in Sapphire.

As indicated in the [MRFF Grant Variation Policy](#), requests to change personnel will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

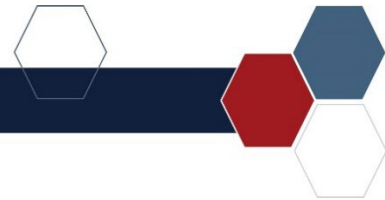
The information required for changes to Chief Investigators includes:

- details of exceptional circumstances
- *if a Chief Investigator is changing role or requesting removal from the grant*, evidence that demonstrates how the change prevents the Chief Investigator from continuing in their role as outlined in the assessed application or approved variation to grant activity
- *if a Chief Investigator is being added to the grant*, justification that demonstrates how the added Chief Investigator will be able and is necessary to implement the grant as outlined in the assessed application or approved variation to grant activity
- details of how the proposed personnel change will affect the completion of the grant while still meeting the objectives and outcomes as outlined in the assessed application or approved variation to grant activity. Grantees should refer to Section 1.3 of the grant opportunity guidelines under which the grant was awarded, as well as the MRFF Measures of Success (if applicable)
- proposed date of effect.

In addition, the MRFF Eligible Organisation must retain the following:

- confirmation from all affected Chief Investigators that they agree to the proposed change
- confirmation from new Chief Investigator(s) that their addition to the team will not result in eligibility issues, and their Profile/CV section(s) in Sapphire are up to date.

The information required for changes to Associate Investigators includes:



- justification for the proposed change
- date of effect.

8. Change in Full-Time Equivalent, Salary or Research Support Package

Change in Full-Time Equivalent, Salary or Research Support Package variations should be requested using the 'Investigator Grant – Change in FTE' variation type in Sapphire.

This variation type is only applicable to MRFF-funded fellowships and Investigator Grants.

The information required for this variation type includes:

- month of commencement for the proposed change
- reason for the proposed change
- type of change:
 - current FTE and proposed new FTE
 - proposed change to research support package
 - proposed change to salary
- duration of the proposed change (e.g. for X months or for the remaining duration of the grant).

9. Change to expenditure, including overseas expenditure

Change to expenditure variations should be requested using the 'Change to Research Plan' variation type in Sapphire.

Use this variation type to request a change to expenditure when that change falls outside the NHMRC's Direct Research Costs Guidelines, such as requests for a change to overseas expenditure. Such requests are still subject to the relevant grant opportunity guidelines, grant agreement, and grant schedule.

Requests for changes to expenditure such as overseas expenditure should use the *Change to expenditure request form* available on NHMRC's website and be uploaded to the 'Change to Research Plan' variation type.

Resources and Contacts

- [MRFF Grant Variation Policy and Appendix](#)
- [Change to expenditure request form](#)
- [Sapphire Variation Instructions and Tutorials](#)
- [MRFF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy](#)
- [Contact MRFF Post Award team](#)