

NHMRC funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers



NHMRC is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers and to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders by improving the quality and relevance of research. NHMRC wants to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers by encouraging applicants to apply to NHMRC schemes.

NHMRC has several schemes to provide salary support or scholarships for health and medical researchers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funding streams for Postgraduate Scholarships, Early Career Fellowships and Career Development Fellowships are available in addition to the usual Biomedical, Clinical, Health Services and Public Health streams.

Postgraduate Scholarships

The Postgraduate Scholarship scheme provides funding to attain a research based postgraduate degree (Doctor of Philosophy or Research Master's degree). Its aim is to support outstanding health, medical and dental graduates early in their career so that they can be trained to conduct research that is internationally competitive and to develop a capacity for original independent research within Australia. Support for international travel, mentoring and networking is also available to scholars through the 'Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks' funding supplement. Applicants must apply for a Postgraduate Scholarship through an administering institution that will host them. More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#).

Early Career Fellowships

Early Career Fellowships are four-year fellowships for early career researchers and are awarded in the domestic, overseas, health professional and Australia-China Exchange categories. Support for international travel, mentoring and networking is also available to scholars through the 'Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks' funding supplement. Applicants must submit their doctoral thesis by 31 Dec of the application year or have held their PhD (or equivalent research intensive qualification) for no more than two years as at 30 June in the year of application. More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#).

Career Development Fellowships

Career Development Fellowships are highly competitive, four-year fellowships that recognise and provide support for the most outstanding early to mid-career health and medical researchers in each Fellowship category: Biomedical, Clinical, Population Health, and Industry. Applicants must have held their PhD (or equivalent research intensive qualification) for no more than seven years for a Level 1 award, and no more than twelve years for a Level 2 award (calculations are made from 31 March in the year of application). Professors are not eligible to apply to this scheme while Associate Professors are only eligible to apply for a Level 2 award. More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#).

Research Fellowships

Research Fellowships are five-year fellowships supporting leading health and medical researchers in full-time research. The scheme aims to support Australia's very best health and medical research talent in full-time research, during the most productive years of their research life. Applicants must hold a PhD (or equivalent research intensive qualification). More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#). This scheme has closed for 2017. Please register for updates [here](#).

Practitioner Fellowships

Practitioner Fellowships are five-year, part-time fellowships for clinicians, public health or health service professionals to engage in research related to their professional activities. The scheme aims to strengthen health and public health practice and services by providing an opportunity for clinical, public and health services research practitioners to combine their research with their professional careers and to facilitate translation of research outcomes into practice. Applicants must hold a PhD (or equivalent research intensive qualification). More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#). This scheme has closed for 2017. Please register for updates [here](#).

Translating Research Into Practice (TRIP) Fellowships

TRIP Fellowships provide support for health care professionals, health care and health systems personnel, health researchers and health policy makers to translate evidence into health care and public health improvements. The Fellowships provide for 0.5 of a full-time equivalent position and ensure time for Fellows to develop the range of skills needed for leadership in

research translation within their career. The scheme is aimed at early to mid-career applicants wishing to combine research translation with their career. Applicants must hold, as a minimum, a relevant Bachelor's degree or tertiary qualification. More detailed eligibility criteria are available [here](#).

Opening and closing dates for applications:

| Funding scheme | Opening Date | Closing date |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Early Career Fellowships | 11 January 2017 | 1 March 2017 |
| Career Development Fellowships | 18 January 2017 | 8 March 2017 |
| TRIP Fellowships | 5 April 2017 | 31 May 2017 |
| Postgraduate Scholarships | 12 April 2017 | 7 June 2017 |
| Practitioner Fellowships | Next round will open late 2017 | |
| Research Fellowships | Next round will open late 2017 | |



Some common assumptions about the NHMRC People Support schemes

- **There are too many applicants, I'll never get a grant**

These schemes are highly competitive as they are designed to fund the best researchers. However, in 2016 there were 13 applicants for these schemes who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, with 5 of them being awarded a grant. That is a 38% success rate compared with the overall rate for all applicants of 23%.

- **I don't have a PhD, so am not eligible for any Fellowship schemes**

The Early Career Fellowship and Career Development Fellowship schemes do allow PhD holders or applicants who do not hold a PhD but can demonstrate an equivalent research intensive qualification to apply. The level of qualification must be equivalent to Level 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013. Eligibility restrictions in terms of time elapsed since the qualification was obtained will still apply.

- **I don't have lots of publications so my track record is poor**

NHMRC peer review involves much more than assessing the publication record of applicants alone. Some examples of other aspects of applicants' track records that are important include their experience and successes in translating research into practice and policy, their involvement in committees, editorial boards or peer review activities, their commercial/industry contributions, conference participation and overall profile in their fields.

- **I have been on maternity leave, have carer duties or have been ill and will not be competitive**

NHMRC peer review will take into account career disruptions and will assess the track record and capabilities of the applicants relative to opportunity.

- **I have spent most of my time in non-research work, and my track record will not be competitive**

NHMRC peer review will take into account the productivity of the applicant relative to stage of career including whether the opportunities to build research track record were available to the applicant. Some applicants may have spent a majority of their time building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods, or spent a significant amount of their time in clinical practice, teaching or related work. These activities will form part of the track record of the applicant and will be taken into account during peer review.

- **Where can I find out more?**

Further details can be found [here](#) or you can contact the NHMRC Research Help Centre at 1800 500 983 or email help@nhmrc.gov.au. Having a discussion with your Research Administration Officer and previously [successful grant holders](#) may also be useful in providing you with guidance.

