2018 EARLY CAREER FELLOWSHIPS - Key changes and important information

**Key Changes**

- **Section 5.1** – wording has been added to clarify the eligibility requirements of MBBS holders
- **Section 5.1** – wording has been added to clarify clinical loading provisions
- **Section 6.2** – INSERM Exchange Fellowship has been removed as a subcategory of the ECF scheme
- **Section 8.1.6** – wording has been added to clarify overseas allowance provisions
- **Section 10.4.3** – wording has been added to clarify Parental leave arrangements

**Critical Dates:**

- 30 January 2017 – internal review by RIC
- 23 February 2017 – final submission to RIC*

*RIC process for submission of Authority to Submit form has changed. Hard copy of form is no longer required and is now to be submitted to RIC by email as one PDF form via nhmrc-people-support@unimelb.edu.au

**Grant Proposal template**

Formatting requirements have been slightly ‘softened’ for all schemes. Some changes are:

- NHMRC now ‘recommend’ a minimum of TNR 12pt font be used (including text within diagrams, graphics and headings) rather than rather than ‘requires’ this font be used.
- Labelling graphs and images – description and/or legends must be no smaller than 12pt Times New Roman. The labelling of graphs and parts of images may be in reduced font, but should be readable by assessors.
- Tables are exempt from minimum font but it must be readable.
- *NEW* If the assessor cannot read the application due to inconsistency with any of the above formatting requirements, or a combination of any of them, the assessor is not compelled to consider the improperly completed section in their assessment or complete the assessment of the application, on the grounds that the application does not comply with the formatting requirements.

(Refer to 2017 Funding Rules Clause 10.3.3 for full details of formatting requirements)

**NHMRC Eligibility**

Applicants must not include in any part of their application, including their CV/Profile:

- links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online. Where links are included, provide the URL in full e.g. the NHMRC website https://www.nhmrc.gov.au
- publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, and the previous Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Ranked Journal list, consistent with the recommendations from the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

**Funding Rules to take special note of:**

- ECF Funding Rules Attachment A – Category Descriptors guide to score applications against assessment criteria.
- ECF Funding Rules Attachment B – List of available Categories of Award and their corresponding Objectives.
- ECF Funding Rules Attachment C – Outlines additional information for the Health Professional Research Fellowship category

4. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria listed below:

1. Research Output – Relative to Opportunity
2. Research Proposal and Environment
3. Professional Contribution – Relative to Opportunity

All applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6 of the NHMRC Funding Rules).

5.2 Citizenship

Applicants who are not Australian citizens (as indicated in Part Pro-PD Personal Details of their CV in RGMS) must indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.
4.2 Requirement to move research group
Applicants who are not changing either their PhD Research Team or, Department or Medical Research Institute during years one and two of their proposed Fellowship must provide a statement to explain why this career path is more beneficial for their advanced health and medical research training.

This statement should be prepared by the applicant in consultation with their proposed supervisor, signed by the supervisor and include details of the program intended to develop the breadth of their research career, in the absence of spending a period of time elsewhere. This requirement applies to all categories of Early Career Fellowships except the Health Professional Research Fellowship category.

5.1 Qualifications
Applicants must:
- Hold a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in either:
  - a health related field of research, or must submit their thesis by 31 December in the year of application (evidence of PhD submission must be provided as soon as the applicant’s PhD is submitted)
  - a non-health related field, or must submit their thesis by 31 December in the year of application but are proposing to undertake health related research (evidence of PhD submission must be provided as soon as the applicant’s PhD is submitted)
- At 30 June in the year of application, have held their PhD for no more than two years (from the date their PhD thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral)) unless career disruptions exist (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules). Applicants must include evidence of the PhD thesis pass date in their application.

Applications will only be accepted from applicants who have held their PhD for no more than four years (from the date their PhD thesis was passed (not date of degree conferral)) as at 30 June in the year of application, unless career disruptions exist, (see section 6.2.1 of the NHMRC Funding Rules 2017) if they are either:
- Applicants who hold a medical qualification (MBBS), and complete a PhD which is then immediately followed by additional clinical training (such applicants must provide evidence of undertaking further clinical training immediately following their PhD), or
- Applying for a Health Professional Early Career Fellowship (refer to Attachment C of ECF Funding Rules).

**The above information is not exhaustive. For full details of eligibility relating to qualifications, please refer to Section 5.1 of the ECF Funding Rules**

5.4 Time Commitment

5.4.1 - Full time fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 80% of this time (i.e. 0.8 FTE) to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship. The remaining 0.2 FTE must be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

5.4.3 - There are occasions when researchers who wish to maintain a research career are unable to do so because their capacity to engage in full-time employment is limited due to pregnancy, major illness, or carer responsibilities including parental leave.

In these circumstances, researchers in all categories, including those whose Fellowships are already taken on a professional part-time basis (under section 5.4.2), are able to receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situations and part-time research. Under this part-time option, a brief justification must be provided. The non-Fellowship time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a fellow’s personal circumstances, and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities.

Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship and the remaining Fellowship time must be spent on activities directly related to research under the Fellowship, including commercial activities, policy development or public health activities. This option is available for 50 – 90% of a full-time position (i.e. 0.5 – 0.9 FTE).