NHMRC Ideas, Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies & Synergy Grants Information Session

An Update

13 December 2018
Disclaimer

The NHMRC released provision guidelines for these schemes in July 2018.

We expect that these will be updated further at the time of scheme open.
What will these schemes fund?

**Ideas Grants**
To support focussed innovative research projects addressing a specific question

**Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies**
To support high-quality clinical trials and cohort studies that address important gaps in knowledge, leading to relevant and implementable findings for the benefit of human health.

**Synergy Grants**
To support outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer major questions that cannot be answered by a single investigator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANT TYPE</th>
<th>IDEAS GRANTS</th>
<th>CLINICAL TRIALS AND COHORT STUDIES GRANT</th>
<th>SYNERGY GRANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Up to 5 years</td>
<td>Up to 5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Chief Investigators</td>
<td>1 – 10</td>
<td>1 – 10</td>
<td>4 – 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Based on the requested budget for research support</td>
<td>Based on the requested budget for research support</td>
<td>$5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas Grants

- As for current Project Grants:
  - Grant size will be based on requested budget
  - Budget request will be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) and direct research costs
  - Chief Investigators may request their salary up to PSP5
- Chief Investigators (CIA – CIJ) may apply for and hold up to two Ideas Grants concurrently (depending on other grants held)
- Purpose is to fund innovative research projects
Ideas Grants – Peer Review

• Panel only (discipline based – 4 assessors per an application)

• Panel only review: panel only, no external assessments or rebuttals, discussion by exception

• Research Quality (35%)

• Innovation and Creativity (25%)

• Significance (20%)

• Feasibility (20%)
Ideas Grants and Investigator grants

- If a CI (CIA-CIJ) concurrently (in the same funding round) applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered. As a consequence, the Ideas Grant will not be eligible for funding.

- Investigator Grant holders are unable to apply for an Ideas grant unless they are in their final year of the Investigator Grant at the time of application.
Ideas Grants WILL NOT fund Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies

An application may be excluded from consideration where NHMRC considers the primary objective to be a clinical trial or cohort study. An application should not be submitted to the Ideas Grant scheme where it meets the objectives and desired outcomes for NHMRC’s Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies scheme (see the Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies 2019 Grant Guidelines).

Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants aim to support high-quality clinical trials and cohort studies that address important gaps in knowledge, leading to relevant and implementable findings for the benefit of human health.
Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies

- As for current Project Grants:
  - Grant size will be based on requested budget
  - Budget request will be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) and direct research costs
  - Chief Investigators may request their salary up to PSP5

- Being a CI does NOT impact Investigator, Ideas or Synergy Grant eligibility or funding package
Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies – Peer Review

• Two stages: initial peer review, shortlist then assess by panel
• Significance (40%)
• Research Quality (40%)
• Team quality and capability – (20%)
Synergy Grants

• Fixed budget of $5 million per grant
• Up to 10 awarded per year
• Budget can be used for Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) and direct research costs
• Chief Investigator salaries can be paid from budget up to PSP5
• Each Chief Investigator (CIA – CIJ) may apply for and hold one Synergy Grant
Synergy Grants – Peer Review

• Panel only – at least 5 assessors per an app

• **Two stages** (Synergy and Knowledge gain only for stage 1; CI Track record stage 2)

• Synergy (30%) - Diverse research teams & collaborative approach (+capacity building)

• Knowledge gain 30% - Quality of the research and the significance of the knowledge gained

• Track record – 40% (last 10 years, 5 best pubs)
Top 5 FAQ
## New Grant Program eligibility – steady state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANT TYPE</th>
<th>INVESTIGATOR GRANTS</th>
<th>SYNERGY GRANTS</th>
<th>IDEAS GRANTS</th>
<th>STRATEGIC &amp; LEVERAGING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of applications allowed per round</td>
<td>1 1 0 0</td>
<td>1 0 1 0</td>
<td>0 1 1 2</td>
<td>Not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum number of each grant type that can be held</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>0 2</td>
<td>Not capped relative to Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</td>
</tr>
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</table>

NOTE: If a CI concurrently applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas grant and both applications are successful, only the Investigator grant will be offered.

RGMS ➤ ? ➤ Sapphire
What EXACTLY do the NHMRC mean by Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies?

- Clinical Trial - For the purposes of registration, a clinical trial is any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more health-related interventions to evaluate the effects on health outcomes.
  
  https://www.who.int/topics/clinical_trials/en/

- Cohort study? – What if it’s a cohort study but does not evaluate health outcomes or does not have ‘implementable findings’ (e.g. it advances basic knowledge)? TBD!
## Critical Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideas Grants</th>
<th>Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants</th>
<th>Synergy Grants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open</strong></td>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>6 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Min. data</strong></td>
<td>10 April – 5pm</td>
<td>10 April – 5pm</td>
<td>17 April – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RIC review deadline</strong></td>
<td>15 April – 10am</td>
<td>15 April – 10am</td>
<td>8 April – 10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal submission deadline</strong></td>
<td>6 May – 10am</td>
<td>6 May – 10am</td>
<td>29 April – 10am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submission deadline</strong></td>
<td>8 May – 5pm</td>
<td>8 May – 5pm</td>
<td>1 May – 5pm</td>
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</table>

Easter: Friday 19 April – Tuesday 23 April  
ANZAC Day: Thursday 25 April
RIC Processes and Resources
What does RIC offer in Application Review?

• We review all sections in RGMS
• We do not review the scientific proposal – we will check that the proposal includes the fields required as per the guidelines
• Tips on whether fields have been addressed
• Check if any sections have been missed
• Check Eligibility
• Check that the general application rules and requirements have been adhered to
Why submit my application for review?
Data from 2018 NHMRC Project Grants

Success rate (%)

- Reviewed: 18.1%
- Not Reviewed: 15.4%

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION & COMMERCIALISATION
Important Links

Notice of Intent:  

RIC NHMRC scheme information pages:  
https://research.unimelb.edu.au/support/funding/nhmrc

RIC NHMRC Changes to Grant Funding Program  
https://research.unimelb.edu.au/support/funding/nhmrc/nhmrc-changes-to-grant-funding-program

NHMRC webpages  
https://nhmrc.gov.au/funding/new-grant-program
Contact us:

RIC – Research Grants, Health and Medical

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