



2018 RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS SCHEME-SPECIFIC FUNDING RULES FOR FUNDING COMMENCING IN 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
1. ABOUT THE SCHEME	3
1.1. Description	3
1.2. Objectives	3
1.3. Who should apply?	3
2. KEY CHANGES	4
3. CRITICAL DATES	4
4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	4
4.1. Additional Criteria for Indigenous Health Applications	4
5. ELIGIBILITY	5
5.1. Qualifications	5
5.2. Time Commitment	5
5.2.1 Full-time Fellowships	5
5.2.2 Part-time Fellowships	5
5.3. Other Appointments	5
5.4. Changes in Employment Circumstances	6
5.5. Other Salaried Awards	6
5.6. Other Funding Sources	6
5.7. Citizenship	6
6. CATEGORIES OF AWARD	6
6.1. Full-time five-year Fellowships	6
6.2. Part-time five-year Fellowships	6
6.3. Honorary Research Fellowships	7
7. TYPES OF APPLICANT	7
7.1. Initial Applicants	8
7.1.1 Initial Applicants to Senior Research Fellow Level	8
7.2. Reapplications	8
7.3. Reapplication with Promotion	8
7.3.1 Promotions Out of Synchrony	8
7.4. Sixth Year Extensions	9

8.	FUNDING	9
8.1.	Level and Duration of Funding	9
8.2.	Use of Funds	9
8.3.	Addition Fellowship Benefits	10
8.3.1	Translation Advancement Incentive	10
8.3.2	Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships	11
8.3.3	Research Grant Support	11
9.	ASSESSMENT PROCESS	11
9.1.	Interviews	11
10.	GRANT ADMINISTRATION.....	12
10.1.	Variations	12
10.2.	Suspension of Research Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons	12
10.3.	Suspension of Research Fellowships for Professional Reasons	12
10.4.	Parental Leave.....	12
10.5.	Request to reduce time commitment	12
10.6.	Request to increase time commitment	13
10.7.	Reporting	13
11.	ATTACHMENTS	13
	ATTACHMENT A – RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS CATEGORY DESCRIPTORS	14
	ATTACHMENT B – STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS.....	19
	ATTACHMENT C – SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION TYPES AND THE CORRESPONDING LEVELS WHICH CAN BE APPLIED FOR	20

INTRODUCTION

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Fellowships scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*
- the *2018 Guide to NHMRC Peer Review*, incorporating the *Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines*
- the *2018 Advice and Instructions to Applicants*
- the [NHMRC Funding Agreement](#).

It is recommended that you read the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules* **before** reading these scheme-specific rules.

This is the final year that the NHMRC Research Fellowships scheme will be offered. New grant funding opportunities will be available through NHMRC's new grant program for funding commencing from 2020.

1. ABOUT THE SCHEME

1.1. Description

A Research Fellowship is a five year Fellowship supporting leading health and medical researchers in full-time research.

1.2. Objectives

The Research Fellowships 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 to further develop as leaders in their field and contribute to the Australian research community through active participation.

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- foster an intellectual environment which supports and builds the capacity of Australian research for the future
- create knowledge through investment in research which improves health and contributes to Australia's prosperity.

1.3. Who should apply?

The Scheme provides support for outstanding health and medical researchers to undertake full-time research that is of major importance in its field and of significant benefit to Australian health and medical research. The Fellowship is available for researchers working in biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research areas. Applicants must be proposing to undertake their research in Australia (see *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 7.4*).

Research Fellowships are open to all researchers in Australia who have a sustained track record of significant and quality research output as judged relative to opportunity.

Research Fellowships are prestigious and highly competitive awards for high performing researchers. Recipients of Research Fellowships are generally in the top 10% of their field and are viewed as 'pushing the boundaries' of research.

2. KEY CHANGES

Applicants should note the following changes to the *2018 Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2019*:

- *Section 6.3 Honorary Research Fellowships* – The reference to Australia Fellowships has been removed as there are no more holders of this Fellowship.

3. CRITICAL DATES

6 December 2017	Applications open in Research Grants Management System (RGMS)
31 January 2018	Applications close in RGMS
14 March 2018	Submissions of special circumstances for interviews (refer to <i>section 9.1</i>)
April 2018*	Initial review outcomes available in RGMS
21 – 25 May 2018	Interviews
July/August 2018*	Notification of outcomes

**Dates are indicative and subject to change*

Completed applications must be submitted to NHMRC in RGMS by **5.00 pm AEDT** on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to *sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules* for further details.

4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria listed below:

1. Vision for the next five years (in alignment with the aims of the scheme).
2. Quality of Research Output (with particular emphasis on the past five years and demonstrating an upward trajectory) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants, translation activities and national and international profile.
3. Contribution to research through research supervision, mentoring, peer review and research administration.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 6.2*).

For further information refer to [Attachment A](#).

Applicants should address any other matters that they believe are relevant to the objectives of the Fellowship scheme. Applicants should describe their achievements relative to their field and opportunity.

4.1. Additional Criteria for Indigenous Health Applications

All applications that are accepted to relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health must also address the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* (see *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules section 6.3*).

Any applications that have applied to be considered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health which do not meet the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* will be assessed as a standard Research Fellowship application.

5. ELIGIBILITY

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their RAO, to judge whether they will be suitable.

Research Fellowships have eligibility criteria additional to those identified in section 7 of the NHMRC Funding Rules. Applications will be excluded from consideration if eligibility requirements are not met or if NHMRC requirements have not been followed (see *section 10.7* of the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*).

5.1. Qualifications

It is expected that applicants will hold a PhD or equivalent research qualification. This is a qualification or experience equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the [Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013](#).

5.2. Time Commitment

5.2.1 Full-time Fellowships

Full-time Research Fellowships provide support for Research Fellows who are employed at 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) to engage in research. Full-time fellows are expected to devote a minimum of 0.8 FTE to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

The remaining 0.2 FTE may be spent on activities directly related to the research under the Fellowship, including clinical responsibilities, commercial activities, policy development and public health activities. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in financial, administrative, academic or managerial activity beyond that which directly relates to their own research.

5.2.2 Part-time Fellowships

Part-time Fellowships are available for researchers who have either:

- parental or carer responsibilities where work time is reduced
- personal circumstances such as illness.

Part-time Fellows must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship, e.g. if a part-time Fellow is employed at 0.5 FTE, at least 80% (i.e. 0.4 FTE) of that time should be devoted to research. The non-fellowship time **cannot** be spent on other research, teaching, clinical or practitioner responsibilities, or administrative roles as identified in section 5.3 of this document.

It is important to note that these Fellowships are intended to be part-time for the duration of the Fellowship.

5.3. Other Appointments

The intent of the Research Fellowship scheme is to support full-time researchers who are leaders in their field and who are involved in the development of future research leaders through supervision and mentoring. The scheme is not designed to allow subsidy of additional appointments related to research such as Institute Director (or equivalent). The funding of these roles is the responsibility of the Institution.

A successful applicant, who in addition holds an appointment such as a full time academic teaching role, directorship of an independent Medical Research Institute, Institute or Centre under university or hospital governance, or a position as Dean, Deputy Vice-chancellor or Pro Vice-chancellor with substantial administrative responsibilities, must relinquish their additional administrative appointment before the Fellowship can commence. Similarly, a Fellow must relinquish their Fellowship if they choose to retain or take up one or more such appointments.

The substantial administrative responsibilities of these above mentioned roles are not compatible with the requirements, expected outcomes and full-time intent of a Research Fellowship.

Any additional appointments held by a Research Fellow are subject to review and clarification at any time throughout the life of the Fellowship.

5.4. Changes in Employment Circumstances

Recipients of a Research Fellowship are not entitled to receive additional salary from another full-time position in conjunction with their Research Fellowship.

Fellows are required to inform the NHMRC (refer to *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 12*) if changes to their employment circumstances occur which affect their eligibility to hold a Research Fellowship. If this happens, the Research Fellowship will cease from the point when the change occurred.

5.5. Other Salaried Awards

Recipients of a Research Fellowship are not entitled to receive additional salary from another comparable Fellowship or award (e.g. Laureate Fellowship) in conjunction with their Research Fellowship. Fellows must relinquish their NHMRC Research Fellowship if they wish to take up the award providing the alternative salary.

5.6. Other Funding Sources

As part of their application, applicants must declare the source, duration and level of any funding already held for the area of research focus around which they are proposing to conduct their Research Fellowship. This includes all NHMRC funding.

This is done to ensure that funding is not duplicated by the Commonwealth or a Funding Partner. NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding.

5.7. Citizenship

For information on citizenship, refer to *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 7.4*.

Note: 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.

6. CATEGORIES OF AWARD

6.1. Full-time five-year Fellowships

These are available to those employed as a 1.0 FTE Research Fellow (see *section 5.2.1*) and are renewable in the final year of funding. Fellows may also apply for Promotion out of Synchrony (see *subsection 7.3.1*).

6.2. Part-time five-year Fellowships

These are available to Fellows who are unable to conduct research full-time (see *subsection 5.2.2*) but will devote at least 80% of their part time commitment to achieving the outcomes of the Fellowship.

These are renewable in the final year of funding. Part-time Fellows may apply for "Promotion out of Synchrony" (see *subsection 7.3.1*). Applications for renewal, or for "Promotion out of Synchrony", may be for either a full-time or part-time Fellowship. When applying for a part-time Fellowship, applicants must indicate in their application the percentage of FTE at which they will undertake their Fellowship (0.5 – 0.9 FTE). Applicants must provide their RAO with a written statement from their employer confirming their proposed

FTE and the reason for this proposed FTE. This statement must be made available to NHMRC upon request at any time during the peer review process and duration of the Fellowship.

If NHMRC considers this amount of FTE is inconsistent with the aims of the scheme or the principles underpinning *section 6.2*, it will review the status of the Fellowship and may require its relinquishment.

A pro-rata package will be provided based on this part-time commitment.

It is important to note that while these Fellowships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time (*see section 10.6*).

6.3. Honorary Research Fellowships

Honorary Research Fellowships are awarded in certain circumstances when, for example a current NHMRC Research Fellow accepts an appointment to another prestigious position in health and medical research.

The following conditions apply in relation to Honorary Research Fellowships:

- Honorary Fellowships are only available to current Research Fellowship holders
- the alternative appointment must be for the conduct of health and medical research
- the alternative appointment must be based in Australia
- the Honorary Research Fellowship cannot be held for longer than the five year period for which the Research Fellowship was originally awarded
- the Fellow must demonstrate that the aims of a non-NHMRC appointment are compatible with the aims of the Research Fellowships Scheme
- remuneration under the Research Fellowship will not be provided by NHMRC during the term of an Honorary Research Fellowship
- if the alternative appointment ceases before the end of the five-year Research Fellowship, the Fellow can re-enter the Research Fellowship scheme and remuneration will commence for the remainder of the Fellowship. However, the total value of the Fellowship is reduced according to the period over which it has been held in an honorary capacity
- if the duration of the other health research appointment extends beyond the expiration date of the Research Fellowship, a current Honorary Research Fellow can reapply for a Research Fellowship, but if successful, must resign from their other appointment before they can commence their new Fellowship (*see section 5.3*) and
- Honorary Fellowships are not available to Fellows who accept remunerated administrative, financial, academic or managerial positions, or other positions such as those described in *section 5.3*.

Fellows who wish to apply for honorary status should contact their RAO at their Administering Institution for advice.

7. TYPES OF APPLICANT

Each year, NHMRC receives applications from current holders of NHMRC Research Fellowships, previous holders of NHMRC Research Fellowships and from researchers who have never held a Research Fellowship. All applicants are subject to the same peer review process and assessment criteria. The final ranked list is established on merit, regardless of the applicant's previous Fellowship status. However, applicants who hold or who have previously held a NHMRC Research Fellowship should note the rules regarding their eligibility in relation to the type and level at which they apply. Selection of the incorrect type and/or level may result in an application being ineligible.

Details on types of applicants are outlined below. There are four levels of Research Fellowships: Senior Research Fellow A and B (SRFA and SRFB, jointly known as "SRF General"), Principal Research Fellow (PRF) and Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF). All applicants should carefully consider their requested application level and apply at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile. For example,

applicants who hold a professorial position should consider applying at PRF or SPRF levels. Details of these four levels can be found at [Attachment B](#).

A summary of application types and the levels which can be applied for is at [Attachment C](#).

Applicants may only submit one application for a Research Fellowship in a funding round.

Applications will only be assessed at the level and type specified in the application.

7.1. Initial Applicants

“Initial Applications” should be submitted by applicants who have never previously held an NHMRC Research Fellowship.

7.1.1 Initial Applicants to Senior Research Fellow Level

“Initial Applications” to the Scheme can be made at any level, including Senior Research Fellow General (SRF General). SRF General applications are assessed at both SRF A and SRF B levels.

7.2. Reapplications

“Reapplications” should be submitted by applicants who currently hold or have previously held a Research Fellowship. “Reapplications” cannot be made at a level lower than the applicants most recently held Research Fellowship (refer to [Attachment C](#)). “Reapplications” are assessed only at the level at which they apply.

Current Fellows must reapply in the final year of funding of their Fellowship and will not automatically be granted an interview. There is no limit to the number of times a Fellow may re-apply to the scheme.

Note: If a returning applicant submits a “Reapplication” at a level higher than their most recently held Research Fellowship, their application will be assessed only at the level at which they applied. No dual assessment of these applications will be made in relation to a previously held level.

Current Fellows who have been awarded a sixth year extension must select “Reapplication” not “Reapplication with Promotion” in their application form. A sixth year Fellow may choose to apply at a level higher than their current level. However, they will be assessed only at the level selected in their application. Such applicants will not be dual scored.

7.3. Reapplication with Promotion

“Reapplications with Promotion” should be submitted by applicants who hold a current Research Fellowship and are seeking promotion to a higher level. Promotions are usually sought in synchrony with reapplication in the final funding year of a current Fellowship; however Fellows may apply for a “Promotion out of Synchrony” (see *section 7.3.1*).

Current Fellows who have been awarded a sixth year extension must not select the application type, “Reapplication with Promotion” (refer to *section 7.2*).

Where an applicant has applied for a “Reapplication with Promotion”, the decision to proceed to interview is based on whether an applicant is competitive at their current level. The promotion request will be addressed at interview and applicants will be assessed at the level of promotion sought and at the fellow’s current level. The level to be funded will be determined post interview based on final rankings. Applicants will be awarded a Fellowship at the highest level at which they are considered competitive within available funding.

7.3.1 Promotions Out of Synchrony

Applications for “Promotion out of Synchrony” can be made by a current Fellow, in years two or three of the current five year Research Fellowship. Promotions will not be considered in years one or four of a current Fellowship.

Periods of suspension (see *section 10.2*) do not contribute to Fellowship time and cannot be included as part of actual Fellowship time that has elapsed. For example, if a Fellow takes a twelve month suspension at the end of the second year of their Fellowship and returns at the beginning of the fourth year, they would be eligible to apply for “Promotion out of Synchrony”. They would be in the third year of their Fellowship, even though four calendar years had elapsed since it commenced.

“Promotions out of Synchrony” will not be considered for current Fellowships held in an honorary capacity.

Applicants who are successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” must relinquish their current Fellowship and commence a new five year Fellowship at the promoted level. Applicants who are not successful in gaining a “Promotion out of Synchrony” will continue at their existing level for the remainder of their current Fellowship.

All applications for “Promotion out of Synchrony” must be submitted as part of the annual cycle of Research Fellowship applications.

7.4. Sixth Year Extensions

Sixth Year Extensions will not be offered to new Fellows for funding commencing from 2016 onwards. However, NHMRC recognises that a transitional period is required for Fellowships that commenced in 2015 or earlier.

Fellows in the final year of a Fellowship for which funding commenced in 2015 or earlier, who are unsuccessful with their reapplication, will be recommended for a sixth year of funding at their current level. However, if such an application receives an overall score of less than five at any stage of the peer review process, a sixth year extension will not be granted.

Note: Decisions in relation to the granting of Sixth Year Extensions are based on the merits of the **current** application and funding policy.

8. FUNDING

For information on the number of Research Fellowship grants awarded in previous funding rounds, refer to the [NHMRC website](#).

8.1. Level and Duration of Funding

The four Research Fellowship levels in increasing order of experience and seniority are:

Lowest to Highest Designation	Package Level
Senior Research Fellow A (SRFA)	RF Package 1
Senior Research Fellow B (SRFB)	RF Package 2
Principal Research Fellow (PRF)	RF Package 3
Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF)	RF Package 4

Each level provides a salary package for five years. This package is based on the percentage of time nominated at application and will be pro-rata adjusted for part-time Fellowships. Salary package amounts, per annum, can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

Applicants, who are successful in obtaining a Fellowship, are expected to commence their Fellowship on 1 January of the first year of the award.

8.2. Use of Funds

The Fellowship funding package is provided to assist with employing the fellow. The actual level of remuneration received by a fellow is agreed through negotiation between the fellow and their employing institution. Refer to *section 5.3* for other appointments that may affect an applicant's ability to accept a Research Fellowship.

The level of this package will apply for the duration of the Fellowship. With the exception of annual indexation, no additional funds will be provided.

8.3. Addition Fellowship Benefits

Applicants may be awarded additional benefits as follows:

8.3.1 Translation Advancement Incentive

Fellows who are active in or commencing translating research outcomes into improved health practice or policy, or to commercialise research discoveries may apply for additional funding via a Translation Advancement Incentive (TAI), previously known as a Support Enhancement Option (SEO).

The TAI is designed to help bridge the gap between health research and health practice or policy, or between health research and commercial or industry developments. The activity to be funded by the TAI must extend beyond the regular research activities undertaken by the applicant, with clear evidence of commencement as a separate and discrete activity.

For Research Fellowships, the TAI is \$15,000 per annum for five years, in addition to the base Research Fellowship Package. For part-time Fellowships, this amount will be adjusted in accordance with the FTE of the part-time Fellowship.

Two categories of TAI are available, *Health Practice* or *Industry*. Applicants may apply for a TAI in one category only. An application for a TAI cannot be made during an existing Fellowship. An application for a TAI can only be made when applying for a new five year Fellowship.

A Health Practice TAI is available to Fellows who can demonstrate that their activities will support the translation of research outcomes into practice and/or policy. Applicants need not have medical or dental qualifications.

An Industry TAI is available to Fellows who can demonstrate that their activities will result in sustained research and development links with industry to support translation of their research into commercial products or applications.

Industry TAI applicants must secure an industry/commercial partner and as part of the application, include a letter of support from the industry/commercial partner. The letter must demonstrate how the industry/commercial partner will be involved in supporting the translation of the applicant's research into commercial products or applications.

A TAI is not a "clinical loading". The TAI must be used to pay for critical resources such as part-time staff to facilitate development or implementation of health practice or commercial translation activities. For example, to pay for a business manager to facilitate negotiations with a devices company. TAI funds **cannot** be used for Direct Research Costs or travel.

The following evaluation factors will be considered when assessing an application for a TAI:

- The applicant has provided evidence that the research has advanced past the basic research phase
- The applicant has provided an action plan outlining the health practice or commercialisation activity (translational activities) that is being undertaken, and evidence that it has commenced
- The applicant has provided justification about how additional funding will assist with implementing translational activities
- The proposed translational activities are achievable within the duration of the Fellowship.

The Peer Review Panel will consider applications for a TAI as part of the peer review of each application at interview and make a recommendation to NHMRC's Research Committee on its award. TAI requests failing to address the evaluation factors will not be awarded.

TAI Reporting Requirements

All Fellows who receive a TAI must provide a report at the conclusion of the Fellowship as part of the Final Report. These reports should detail current progress/status of all translational activities as outlined in their original TAI request and must be emailed to postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au.

Payment of existing Support Enhancement Option for Sixth Year Extensions

Fellows in the fifth year of a Fellowship which included an SEO component, for which funding commenced in 2015 or earlier, who were unsuccessful with their reapplication, will continue to receive their SEO payment for the sixth year extension of their award.

8.3.2 Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships

Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships recognise one of Australia's Nobel Laureates, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn. The Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowships were established to promote and foster the career development of female researchers and are awarded annually to the highest ranked, funded female applicant in each of the biomedical, clinical and public health pillars of the Research Fellowship scheme. Applicants do not need to apply for this award. This award does not provide any additional funding to the Research Fellowship package.

8.3.3 Research Grant Support

Applicants must either have already obtained financial support for their research activity or have an application pending. Applicants are encouraged to have research grant support from both the NHMRC and other external funding bodies. Research grant support from NHMRC is available through a variety of schemes, for example Program Grants, Project Grants and Partnership Projects. Information regarding NHMRC funding schemes is available on the NHMRC website under Apply for funding. Applicants should refer to the scheme-specific funding rules to confirm any conditions or provisions in relation to payment of salary.

9. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

For information on the peer review process, see the *2018 Guide to NHMRC Peer Review* and *2018 Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2019*.

9.1. Interviews

Applicants who have been invited to participate in an interview must make themselves available for their interview at the time and date nominated by NHMRC. All interviews will be conducted by telephone and will be scheduled to commence 21 May 2018. The interview schedule will not be altered after the advice specifying interview times has been sent to applicants. Where an applicant is planning travel overseas during the period of interviews, or has a disability that would affect their participation in a telephone interview, they should advise NHMRC via the [webform](#) **no later than COB 14 March 2018** so that suitable times or arrangements can be agreed. Whilst every effort is made to consider different time zones, it may not always be possible to schedule the interview within business hours of the relevant time zone.

Note: If an applicant is invited to interview, they must accept the invitation by submitting a suitable contact phone number to be used for their interview. If contact details are not received by NHMRC by the nominated date (to be advised at time of initial review outcomes), NHMRC will assume the applicant has declined the invitation for interview and the application may be withdrawn.

Additional information pertaining to an application will not be accepted nor provided to the panel at any time during the peer review process.

10. GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Research Fellowship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the *NHMRC Funding Agreement*, sections 12.3 and 12.7 of the 2018 *NHMRC Funding Rules* and on the [NHMRC website](#).

10.1. Variations

Requests to vary the terms of a Research Fellowship should be made to NHMRC via the RGMS Grantee Variation Portal and through the RAO of your Administering Institution. Additional information can be found at section 12.5 of the 2018 *NHMRC Funding Rules* and on the [NHMRC website](#).

10.2. Suspension of Research Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Research Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including pregnancy, major illness and carer responsibilities including parental leave. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension, and payments will be deferred until after the period of suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension (see section 12.6 of the 2018 *NHMRC Funding Rules* for further information).

10.3. Suspension of Research Fellowships for Professional Reasons

Research Fellows may apply for suspension of their Fellowship if they take up the position of Interim Director of an institute. Requests to suspend the Fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension and payments will be deferred until after the period of suspension. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension (refer to section 12.6 of the 2018 *NHMRC Funding Rules* for further information).

The Fellow will need to demonstrate that the role of the new position is consistent with the aim of the Research Fellowship Scheme which is to support researchers in full-time research during the most productive years of their research life. The Fellow must indicate that the intention is to return to the scheme on a full-time basis to complete the Fellowship.

10.4. Parental Leave

Parental leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the Fellow's Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the Fellow wishes to take parental leave, they will need to suspend their Fellowship (see section 10.2).

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.5. Request to reduce time commitment

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Fellows can change over time and that for a period of time, the need for a Fellow to continue in a full-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Full-time Fellows may apply to undertake a period of their award on a part-time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support, as outlined in subsection 5.2.2.

In all cases where part-time status is approved, the duration of the Fellowship will be extended to compensate for the part-time period. Remuneration will be adjusted pro-rata for the part-time period.

10.6. Request to increase time commitment

While part-time Research Fellowships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time. Where a request to convert to full-time is approved, the remaining part-time portion of the Fellowship will be converted to the full-time equivalent of that part-time rate, i.e. if 3 years remain on a Fellowship held at 0.5 FTE, it will be converted to 1.5 years full-time.

10.7. Reporting

Refer to the [NHMRC website](#) for information regarding reporting requirements.

11. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Research Fellowships Category Descriptors

Attachment B - Statement of Expectations

Attachment C - Summary of Research Fellowship application types and corresponding levels which can be applied for

ATTACHMENT A – RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS CATEGORY DESCRIPTORS

Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Contributions

NHMRC recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions should be considered when assessing research output and track record.

Score	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3
	<p>VISION Vision for the next 5 years (in alignment with the aims of the scheme).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 25%</p>	<p>RESEARCH OUTPUT AND LEADERSHIP Quality of Research Output (with particular emphasis on the past five years and demonstrating an upward trajectory) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants, translational activities, and national and international profile.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 60%</p>	<p>CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH Contribution to research through research supervision, mentoring, peer review and research administration.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 15%</p>
<p>The following scoring descriptors are to be used as a guide to score an application against each of the assessment criteria. The descriptors are indicative rather than exhaustive. Evaluation of performance will take into account opportunity, research discipline and be an overall summation of research contribution.</p>			
<p>7</p> <p>An exceptionally strong application which clearly supports the aims of the scheme and meets all the assessment criteria, with essentially no weaknesses.</p> <p>It is expected that only the top 2% of applications would be ranked in this category.</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that is highly innovative, transformative and achievable within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of utmost importance to human health and will have a very significant impact. • Demonstrates a clear vision which will advance the field and expand Australia's research capacity in this area. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is highly recognised, or has emerging high recognition internationally for their contribution to their field of research. • Has consistently published research that is highly influential. • Has a demonstrated clear, rapid and continuing upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a multidisciplinary and strong collaborative approach to research. • Has had consistent success in obtaining major international and/or national grants as Chief Investigator A (CIA). • Has demonstrated major transformational contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has extensive evidence of primary supervision and mentoring of PhD candidates (or equivalent) with successful completions. • Has had extensive involvement in the peer review of grants both nationally and internationally. • Has extensive experience in the review of publications, including editorial roles in top international journals. • Holds leadership positions in highly regarded international scientific or professional societies. • Has demonstrated clear evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy; government advisory roles and clinical practice. • Has a significant leadership role

		<p>clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has given several key plenary presentations at major international meetings. • Has received major international recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>within a Departmental Centre or Institute.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>A very strong application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, with only some minor weaknesses.</p> <p>It is expected that the top 3-5% of applications would be ranked in this category or above.</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an innovative proposal that has the potential to be transformative and is likely to be achieved within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of major importance to human health and will have a strong impact. • Demonstrates a vision which is likely to advance the field and expand Australia's research capacity in this area. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an established national and growing international reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that is highly influential. • Has a demonstrated upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a multidisciplinary approach to research with good collaborations. • Has had success in obtaining major international and/or national grants as CIA. • Has made major contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system. • Has been an invited speaker at several major international meetings. • Has received major national recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has strong evidence of primary supervision and mentoring of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had major involvement in the peer review of grants nationally, and some internationally. • Has very good experience in the review of publications, including editorial roles in discipline specific journals. • Holds leadership positions in well regarded scientific or professional societies. • Has demonstrated evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a Departmental Centre or Institute.

<p>5</p> <p>The application meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria but has identified weakness requiring additional consideration by the panel.</p> <p>May be considered for interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has at least one innovative idea but may not be achieved within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of considerable importance to human health and may have some impact. • Demonstrates a vision which may advance the applicants field of endeavour. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a good national and emerging international reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that is influential. • Has demonstrated the beginnings of an upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a good collaborative approach to research. • Has had success in obtaining major national grants as CIA • Has made contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system. • Has been an invited speaker at major national meetings. • Has received national recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has evidence of primary supervision and some mentoring of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had considerable involvement in the peer review of grants nationally and occasionally internationally. • Has very good experience in the review of publications but with no editorial roles identified. • Holds minor role(s) in professional societies (senior office bearer or meeting organiser, editorial board responsibility).Has demonstrated some evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has an emerging leadership role within a Departmental Centre or Institute.
<p>4</p> <p>The application only partly meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview (not considered a fundable proposal)</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has some novel aspects, but predominately extends existing knowledge. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of some importance to human health and may have some impact. • Has a developing vision of their contribution to their field of endeavour. • Presents a proposed body of research that only partly aligns with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a growing national reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that makes specialised contributions to knowledge. • Has demonstrated the potential to have an upward trajectory in research output. • Has demonstrated emerging collaborative activities. • Has had some success in obtaining major national grants but not necessarily as CIA or grant funding is primarily from specialist agencies. • Has made minor contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of primary supervision and joint supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had some involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has good experience in the review of publications but with no editorial roles identified. • Holds membership of professional societies or other evidence of emerging professional activities. • Has demonstrated little evidence of other key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a department.

		<p>commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has presented orally at national meetings but not as an invited speaker. • Has received some recognition for research outcomes. 	
<p>3</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has relatively little novelty and is not particularly innovative. • Proposed a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of some concern to human health and may have some impact. • Plays an important role in the research but is not a driver for the project vision. • Presents a vision that is not in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is developing a national reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that sustains the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has little evidence of potential to have an upward trajectory. • Has little evidence of collaborative activities outside of their institution. • Has had some success in obtaining national grants from specialist agencies (e.g. Cancer Council, National Heart Foundation (NHF) etc. • Has little evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has limited evidence for oral presentations at national meetings. • Has received little recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of involvement in joint supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has emerging evidence of involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has some experience in the review of publications. • Holds membership of professional societies. • Has demonstrated little evidence of other key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a research laboratory.

<p>2</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that follows previously well documented and studied concepts. • Proposed a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of only marginal concern to human health and is unlikely to yield a significant impact. • Is key but not necessarily the lead in the vision of the research proposal which is not in alignment with the aims of the scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has demonstrated little evidence of a developing reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that has had some contribution to the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has no evidence of potential to have an upward trajectory. • Has received grants funding primarily from local institutional sources rather than competitive grant funding. • Has little or no evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has little or no evidence for oral presentations at meetings. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of minor involvement in supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent. • Has had little involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has little experience in the review of publications. • Holds membership of some professional societies. • Has a leadership role within a research team.
<p>1</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that is not innovative or significant. • Proposed a proposed body of research that does not address an issue of concern to human health. • Demonstrated little or no evidence of a research vision that is not in alignment with the aims of the scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not have a reputation for their contribution to their field of research outside their institution. • Has published some research that has had little impact on the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has little evidence of research independence. • Has received minimal grant funding from local institution sources rather than competitive grant funding. • Has no evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has no evidence of presentations at meetings. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has evidence of some involvement in supervision of Honours research and other higher degree candidates. • Has no evidence of involvement in the peer review of grants. • Has no evidence of involvement in the review of publications. • Holds membership of a small national professional society. • Has no evidence of leadership roles.

ATTACHMENT B – STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

The Statement of Expectations sets out a broad outline of activities, attributes and achievements within the levels of the Research Fellowships scheme. In coming to decisions about the relative merits of applicants for these positions, assessors will consider research output relative to opportunity. Applicants should note the attached Category Descriptors ([Attachment A](#)) which identify quality of research and associated outcomes. The list of descriptors is meant to be indicative rather than exhaustive.

Senior Research Fellow (SRF)

SRF A - General Standard: To be competitive for the award of Fellowships at SRF A level, applicants will have provided convincing evidence that they have independently conceived and conducted sound and original research. They will also demonstrate that they have regularly published research findings in high quality peer reviewed international journals, specific to their fields of research, independently or as part of a research team. They are expected to be adept in leadership and mentoring and show capacity for future significant research achievement, including potential for translation of their work into practice. They will have demonstrated an established national and a developing international profile. Fellows will provide evidence of continuing development in relevant research expertise, research group leadership and contribution to their fields of research.

SRF B - General Standard (compared with SRF A level): To be competitive for the award of Fellowships at SRF B level, applicants will demonstrate marked distinction in their research and leadership compared with SRF A level. SRF B Fellows will have provided convincing evidence that they are making substantial, original and independently conceived major contributions to research as demonstrated by dissemination of their research findings through influential publications and other communication means. Fellows are expected to demonstrate significant research achievements, strong potential for outputs and translation of their work into practice and effective research leadership, supervision and mentoring. They will have demonstrated an established national and international profile. They will already be making significant contributions to their profession and discipline rather than just showing the potential to do so.

Principal Research Fellow (PRF)

General Standard: Principal Research Fellows will be recognised as leading authorities in their research area and will have made substantial and highly original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research and research translation. They will play a leading role within their profession or discipline in research supervision, mentoring and training, both in their organisation, and within the scientific community, demonstrating a commitment to building and leading excellence in research.

Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF)

General Standard: Senior Principal Research Fellows will be recognised as leading international authorities in their research area. Fellows will demonstrate world class standards of achievement in research, research translation, expertise, vision, supervision and mentoring. They will have made significant and highly original contributions that are of major importance, influence, and of significant benefit to health and medical research. Fellows are expected to lead research teams and collaborative networks of the highest quality, demonstrating a commitment to leading and exemplifying excellence in research.

ATTACHMENT C – SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION TYPES AND THE CORRESPONDING LEVELS WHICH CAN BE APPLIED FOR

		Apply for either:					
Application Type	Current Level	SRF (general)	SRFA	SRFB	PRF	SPRF	Assessment
Initial	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Assessed at requested level only (except for SRF(general) which is assessed at SRFA and B)
Reapplication (including sixth year Fellows and previous Fellows re-entering the scheme)	SRFA		✓	✓	✓	✓	Assessed at requested level only
	SRFB			✓	✓	✓	
	PRF				✓	✓	
	SPRF					✓	
Promotion out of synchrony (available to current Fellows in their second or third year of funding ONLY)	SRFA			✓	✓	✓	Assessed at requested level only
	SRFB				✓	✓	
	PRF					✓	
	SPRF	-	-	-	-	-	
Reapplication with promotion (NOT sixth year Fellows or previous Fellows re-entering the scheme)	SRFA			✓	✓	✓	Assessed at current and requested levels
	SRFB				✓	✓	
	PRF					✓	
	SPRF	-	-	-	-	-	

Note: All applicants should carefully consider their requested application level and apply at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile (see section 7).