

NHMRC / IDEAS GRANT – Tip Sheet

The **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Ideas Grants** scheme is for innovative and creative research in any area of health and medical research and is available to researchers at all career stages for 1-5 year projects.

Read the [NHMRC Guidelines and supporting documents](#) (register with Grant Connect to log in and receive updates).

Ensure your application is easy to read and free from jargon with a clear, well-defined research plan.

NHMRC Sapphire User Account

- All CIs and AIs must create an account for the [NHMRC Sapphire system](#) and complete their profile.
- All new account requests need to be verified and approved so allow time.
- If CIs already have a Sapphire account, ensure profiles are updated, specifically the mandatory fields.

ORCID ID

[Link your ORCID ID to Sapphire](#). This is optional however provides greater flexibility in managing your publication history.

Important Notes

- **Application Limits:** CIs (**CIA-CIJ**) may apply for/hold a maximum of two grants concurrently from the Investigator and Ideas grant schemes.
**For the 2025 round, this applies to the 2025 Investigator grant round that closed in Aug 2024, and the Ideas grant round currently open. Withdrawn applications continue to affect the eligibility of other Investigator or Ideas grants.*
- **Same Round:** If a CI applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant (**CIA-CIJ**) in the same round and both are successful only the Investigator grant will be awarded. Consequently, the Ideas Grant will not be eligible for funding.
- **Investigator Grant Holders:** cannot apply for an Ideas grant unless they are in their final year of the Investigator grant at the time of application.
- Clinical Trials and cohort studies are not supported by this scheme
- **2025 Investigator Grant Outcomes:** Outcomes from the Investigator grant 2025 round should be known (under embargo) so please check before adding researchers to the CI team.
- **Funding Partners:** Application limits do not apply to applications *only* seeking funding from other funding partners. Funding partners in this round include **Cancer Council NSW, Cancer Council SA** and the **McCusker Charitable Foundation** (for applications in the areas of Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, Crohn’s disease, Colitis, Tourette syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue). Applicants seeking funding from a partner need to be aware of any additional eligibility and application requirements.
- **Eligibility Scenarios:** Please see [Appendix D](#) of the guidelines for scenarios and the [eligibility tool](#).
- **NHMRC structural priorities:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers; and Gender Equity (female and non-binary lead investigators). See [Appendix A](#) for detailed information relating to the NHMRC structural priorities, Ideas Grants 2025 priorities, and funding organisations.
- **All grants** are expected to commence on 1 January 2026.

Application Essentials

- **CIs:** Maximum number of CIs and AIs respectively is 10.
- **CI Limits:** Be mindful of how many applications you have your name on as CI – feel free to ask for advice!
- **Minimum data:** Required in Sapphire by minimum data deadline. Placeholder text is not acceptable
- **Formatting:** Refer to [Appendix E](#) of the Guidelines. The NHMRC provides a template for the proposal, please use and do not alter.
- **Character count:** These may not directly translate if working from a word document. We recommend you insert text into the sections of the online Sapphire application form early to ensure you are within limits and have time to amend, if needed.
- **Links:** Must only be used for publications, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online. Do not include them throughout the application for any other reason.
- **Publication metrics** such as Journal Impact Factors should not be used, if included these will be disregarded by peer reviewers.
- **Profile:** Changes made in CI profiles after CIA certification will not appear in the application.
- **Consumer and community involvement:** You are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers and community involvement throughout all stages of research. [NHMRC resources](#) are available to assist.

Budget

- **Contact:** your School Finance Coordinator for assistance.
- **Overall budget:** should be realistic, value for money and must align with the proposed aims of the study.
- **Personnel Salary costs:** based on rates set by the NHMRC called [Personnel Support Packages \(PSPs\)](#). As PSP amounts are lower than actual cost, a shortfall applies and needs to be costed and approved prior to submission. PSP levels should be based on function of the position, not the person.
- **CI Salary:** CIs, including CIA, may request salary if they are based in Australia at least 80% of the time.
- **Overseas CIs:** CIs based overseas cannot a request salary, however PSPs for overseas research support staff may be considered if essential to the project.
- **HDR Stipends:** can be requested as 50% of PSP3.
- **Equipment:** equipment requests should only be for items costing more than \$10,000 but cannot exceed a total of \$80,000 per project. Quotes are required. Equipment costing less than \$10,000 must be included in 'Other research costs'.
- **Computers:** Funds will not be provided for computers unless it's an integral component of a piece of lab equipment or essential for work in the research field.

Budget Justification

- Ensure you fully justify all of the requested funding items.
- In the case of equipment costing less than \$10,000 provide justification why it can't be provided by the Institution.
- Poorly justified budgets run the risk of being adjusted.

Application Assessment

- Applications are assessed by peers against four criteria: Research Quality (35%) (***NEW*** *this now includes an additional component whereby peer reviewers will take into consideration the extent of alignment of the grant proposal to scheme objectives and expected outcomes*), Innovation and Creativity (25%), Significance (20%), and Capability (20%).

- Category descriptors are used as a guide to scoring against the four assessment criteria and are available at [Appendix B](#) of the guidelines along with a separate document of [Peer Review Guidelines](#).

Submitting the Application

After the Research Administration Coordinator review and the application is ready to be submitted, you must certify and submit via Sapphire, then ECU Research Services will submit to the NHMRC.

Contact

For further assistance: Please contact your school Research Administration Coordinator (RAC) or Team leader Research Administration: Email: research-preaward@ecu.edu.au

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