



# **Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants 2023 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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## **Contents**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>2</b>
FAQ – 1: Feedback for applicants	2
FAQ – 2: CTCS 2023 funding commencement	2
FAQ – 3: Definitions of a clinical trial and cohort study	2
FAQ – 4: Existing clinical trials and cohort studies	3
FAQ – 5: Ideas Grants vs Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants	3
FAQ – 6: Capping	3
FAQ – 7: Salaries	4
FAQ – 8: Chief Investigator – PhD student	4
FAQ – 9: Funding for Scholarships	4
FAQ – 10: ‘App’ Development	5
FAQ – 11: Period considered for Team Quality and Capability	5
FAQ – 12: Budget Years	5

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## FAQ – 1: Feedback for applicants

**Question:** Will applicants be provided with feedback on their applications?

**Answer:** All applicants will be provided with qualitative and quantitative feedback. Each application may receive up to three sets of feedback from peer reviewers. Applications that are assessed at the panel review stage will receive an additional set of feedback that reflects the panel discussion.

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## FAQ – 2: CTCS 2023 funding commencement

**Question:** When will funding commence for the CTCS 2023 round?

**Answer:** Funding will commence 1 July 2024 for the CTCS 2023 round.

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## FAQ – 3: Definitions of a clinical trial and cohort study

**Question:**

Our researchers would like more information on the definitions of a clinical trial and cohort study.

**Answer:**

The Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants 2023 Guidelines state that the scheme will support:

- High-quality clinical trials that provide reliable evidence of the effects of health-related interventions on health outcomes (or appropriate surrogates). This means that:
    - the project must involve human participants
    - the participants are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions
    - the effects of the intervention(s) on the participants will be examined, and
    - the anticipated effects of the intervention will be a behavioural and/or health-related outcome.
  - High-quality cohort studies that provide reliable evidence on the relation of important risk factors and other exposures to health-related outcomes. This means that:
    - the project must involve human participants
    - the participants are prospectively followed over a defined period of time, and
    - the project aims to evaluate associations between one or more factors in the cohort with a behavioural and/or health-related outcome.
  - High quality retrospective cohort studies that provide reliable evidence on the relation of important risk factors and other exposures to health-related outcomes. This means that:
    - the project must involve human participants
    - the project will collect and examine retrospective data and may involve some elements of data linkage work, and
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- the project aims to evaluate associations between one or more factors in the cohort with a behavioural and/or health-related outcome.

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## FAQ – 4: Existing clinical trials and cohort studies

### Question:

The Grant Guidelines states “*Please note that the Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants scheme is not intended to provide ongoing support from NHMRC.....*”.

Does this mean that existing studies are not eligible to apply for funding support through this scheme, even if new data collection, new sample collection or new analyses are proposed?

### Answer:

The objective of the CTCS scheme is 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.

The scheme is open to all types of clinical trials and cohort studies that address the scheme objective and desired outcomes. Accordingly, existing clinical trials and cohort studies that meet the objective and desired outcomes of the scheme will be considered. However, NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded. CTCS grants can be requested for between one and five years, not on an on-going basis.

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## FAQ – 5: Ideas Grants vs Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants

### Question:

Should my research proposal be submitted to the Ideas Grants or Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grants scheme?

### Answer:

Where projects have elements consistent with both the Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies Grant scheme and the Ideas Grant scheme, applicants should decide where the project is predominantly suited, based on the objectives and outcomes of the respective schemes and where the application would receive the most appropriate peer review. It is up to the applicant to consider the objectives of NHMRC schemes and the Grant Guidelines in order to determine which scheme they wish to apply for. The applicant may also wish to consider the category descriptors at [Appendix B](#) of the CTCS and Ideas Grant Guidelines to see where their application would be most competitive.

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## FAQ – 6: Capping

### Question:

Can you confirm that there are no restrictions on the number of applications or grants held under this scheme?

### Answer:

There are no capping restrictions on the number of applications or grants held in the CTCS scheme.

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## FAQ – 7: Salaries

**Question:**

Can a Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS) grant support a salary?

**Answer:**

Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies grants are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs. However, if salaries are sought for CIs, the costs must be directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research.

**Question:**

Can you please clarify that an applicant is permitted to draw multiple partial salaries across multiple applications.

**Answer:**

Yes, an applicant can draw multiple partial salaries if allowed in the guidelines for the schemes, but cannot receive more than 100% salary. Further information is provided in section 5.1.1 of the Grant Guidelines.

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## FAQ – 8: Chief Investigator – PhD student

**Question:**

Can a PhD student be named as a Chief Investigator (CI) on a grant?

**Answer:**

PhD students may be named as CIs in exceptional circumstances where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. CIs are expected to remain active on the Research Activity as outlined in the application for the duration of the grant. The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. Please refer to section 4.1 of the Grant Guidelines for information about the CIs and Associate Investigators. The Grant Guidelines do not require that CIs hold a PhD.

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## FAQ – 9: Funding for Scholarships

**Question:**

Can a scholarship be funded under other research costs?

(Note that 'direct research costs' are now called 'other research costs (ORC)' in Sapphire)

**Answer:**

Postgraduate students (Masters by Research and PhD) may be supported via NHMRC research grants in line with any conditions of the Administering Institution. A Personnel Support Package (PSP) 1 at 50% may be claimed (from the ORC package) to support the student. However, the student must not be named as being in receipt of an NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship, as this is a specific category of competitively awarded NHMRC grant funding. Further information can be found on the NHMRC website at: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/personnel-and-salary-support-packages>.

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## FAQ – 10: ‘App’ Development

**Question:**

Is the cost of an ‘app’ part of the equipment budget?

**Answer:**

If the ‘app’ conforms with the Direct Research Costs Principles, it should be listed as such, irrespective of the cost. Please refer to the NHMRC Direct Research Costs Guidelines to check if the proposed ‘app’ conforms with the Direct Research Costs Principles.

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## FAQ – 11: Period considered for Team Quality and Capability

**Question:**

Can you please advise how the period for Career Disruptions, Relative to Opportunity and Publications are calculated?

**Answer:**

The date on which the grant scheme closes is where years of track record should be calculated. For example, if a grant scheme closes on 1 April 2023 and career disruptions are calculated over the last 10 years, the range should then be from 31 March 2013 to 1 April 2023.

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## FAQ – 12: Budget Years

**Question:**

Noting the funding commencement date is the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024; can you clarify if the budget years are to be calendar years or project years?

**Answer:**

Sapphire records budget for project years (Year 1, Year 2, etc) therefore the proposed funding would commence with the start of budget Year 1 on 1 July each year.

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