THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
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NHMRC Investigator Grants 2026 *for funding in 2027*

Guide to building your application

UQ Research Office

Version 1
June 2025

Overview

- This *How To* Guide has been prepared by UQ R&I's Research Office to assist applicants in the development of their NHMRC Investigator Grant 2026 application.
- The Guide provides suggests approaches to key sections of the application form and is supported with examples from past successful UQ applications.
- The Guide is intended for use in conjunction with additional UQ resources available from the Research Office Investigator Grant website, including UQ's templates, Information Session slides/recording, Key Findings and UQ Library resources.
- Applicants should familiarise themselves with all NHMRC documentation, including the Guidelines available from GrantConnect.

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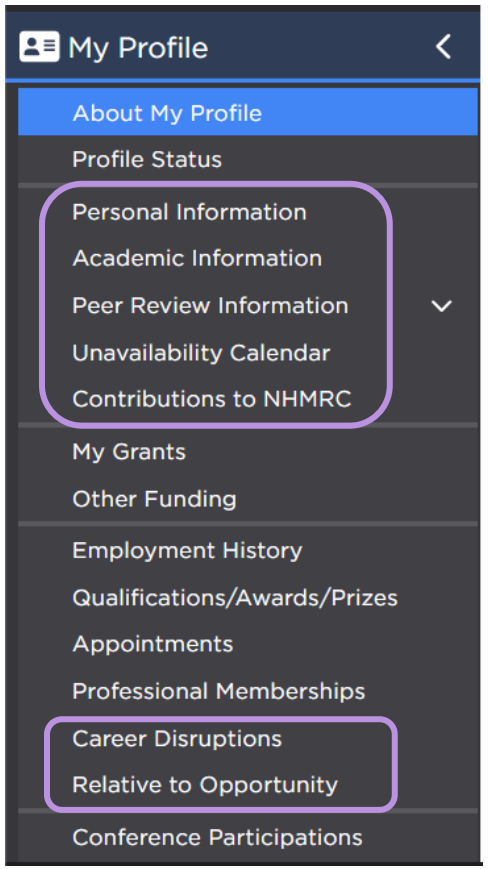
Sapphire Profile

Your Profile



- Your Sapphire profile includes mandatory information (indicated by a red asterisk* in Sapphire) that must be complete prior to application submission. Mandatory information includes:
  - Personal information – NHMRC relies on this to contact you
  - Academic Information – PhD information
  - Peer review information – Broad Research Area, Fields of Research. Used if you are successful to allocate applications to you for review. This information will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application. An opportunity is provided in the application to select research areas, fields of research and keywords that best describe your proposal.
  - Unavailability Calendar: periods that you are unavailable to contribute to peer review
  - Contributions to NHMRC: indicate roles in which you have participated in NHMRC activity
- For Investigator Grants, in addition to the standard mandatory information you must complete your Title, Gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (under Personal Information).
- If you are claiming career disruptions or including relative to opportunity considerations, please add them to the relevant sections in your profile.
- We recommend keeping all sections (not just the mandatory ones) up to date in Sapphire.
- 'My Profile' information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made after CI certification (application finalisation) will not appear in the submitted application.

Refer to the Sapphire Learning and Training Resources for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.

The Investigator Grant application form

- Application Details ✓
- Participating Institutions ✓
- Research Classification ✓
- Ethics ✓
- Researcher ✗
- Salary Declaration Summary ✗
- Relative to Opportunity ✗
- Strategic Priorities and Funding Partners ✗
- Track Record ✗
- Grant Proposal ✗
- Certification ✗

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Application Details

Application Details

- **Application Title** should not include acronyms.
- **Administering Institution** should be "The University of Queensland" not a specific faculty/school/institute/centre.
- **Grant duration** is always "5 years"
- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Research:** If yes is selected -
  - the proposal must demonstrate a significant (at least 20%) research effort in this area
  - Four additional fields will open for you to explain how the research addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* in four areas: 'Community Engagement', 'Benefit', 'Sustainability and Transferability' and 'Building Capability'.

- **Privacy agreement**: answer should be "*Yes*" to both items.
- **Partner organisation consent**: the NHMRC will occasionally send applications they have not funded on to other potential funders. We recommend that you select "*Yes*" here. Note that if the application is funded by another funder, any salary gap must be covered by the faculty/institute.

Project synopsis

- This summarises the research and vision of the proposed research.
- It should mention the aims, hypothesis, significance, outcomes and benefits.
- NHMRC may use this information to assign applications to panels and peer reviewers.
- The synopsis section is **not** an opportunity to provide additional track record information.

Synopsis – Leadership Example

1. Significance
2. Brief Background
3. Aims
4. Outcomes with benefit

Hypoxic-ischemic injury during childbirth is the leading cause of stillbirth and neonatal death worldwide[1]. It predisposes to cerebral palsy and premature death in adult survivors. The Lancet, WHO and Gates Foundation identify research to reduce infant and maternal complications related to birth asphyxia as an urgent unmet need and a pressing global priority[1].

Prior to my research[2], accurate pre-labour identification of infants at risk of hypoxic birth injury was not possible and there was no preventative treatment.

I showed that infants who develop fetal distress in labour have abnormal cerebral circulation before labour commences and their mothers have poorer placental function. I demonstrated that maternal Sildenafil in labour preserves placental function, prevents fetal distress and reduces operative birth for fetal distress. My research has fundamentally shifted understanding of this important pregnancy complication.

My overarching aim[3] is to reduce the devastating burden of hypoxia related complications by focusing on three programs of inter-related work: Prevention, Treatment and Development of screening tools:

1. Prevention and Treatment: Evaluate maternal Sildenafil to prevent fetal distress, operative birth and adverse neonatal outcomes.

2. Development of screening tools: (i) Develop an accurate screening test for adverse perinatal outcomes related to hypoxic birth injury from routinely collected data using artificial intelligence methods and (ii) identify key biomarkers in maternal circulation and evaluate their predictive utility for adverse perinatal outcomes.

My research will[4] revolutionise how Australian women are managed in labour, reduce caesarean rates, improve perinatal outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. It will also have major international impact, especially in low- and middle-income countries where hypoxia related complications are more common.

**Sailesh Kumar – Successful Applicant*

Synopsis – Emerging Leadership Example

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is one of the leading causes of dementia. In Australia, the economic burden of dementia was $15 billion in 2020 and 28,300 people are living with younger onset dementia. Infectious gut-microbes have recently emerged as silent drivers of brain disorders, however, the molecular mechanisms by which infectious gut-bacteria exerts its pathogenic effect remains unknown[1]. My research demonstrated[2] that biofilm components of infectious gut-bacteria (microbial amyloids) can trigger or accelerate toxic protein-aggregation in the brain, thus contributing to the pathogenesis of AD. I have also synthesised chaperone-like nanoparticles that cross the blood-brain barrier, inhibit the toxic protein-aggregation and mitigate the associated neurotoxicity. Building on these discoveries, this project is underpinned by the hypothesis[3] that biofilm components from gut-bacteria are responsible for early-onset or accelerated pathologies in AD.

In this proposal, I aim to investigate[4] the mechanisms of interaction and routes of access that are used by microbial amyloids to initiate/accelerate the toxic protein-aggregation process in the brain. I will also modify the design of my chaperone-nanoparticles for dual functionality, to simultaneously mitigate the toxic protein-aggregation in the brain and block the pathogenic involvement of gut-microbes.

This project will provide new understanding[5] of the molecular involvement of gut-bacteria in AD pathology and pre-clinical development of a new class of nanomedicine to block this involvement and slow-down or prevent the progression/early onset of AD. The expected outcomes will also have broader knowledge implications in other protein-aggregation diseases such as Parkinson's disease and arthritis. The success of this project will have longer term impact by improving the therapeutic outcomes[5] for people living with dementia and guiding the future drug development for brain and aging diseases.

1. Significance
2. Brief Background
3. Hypothesis
4. Aims
5. Outcomes and benefits

**Ibrahim Javed – Successful Applicant*

Plain English Summary

- Describes the overall aims of the research
- This information may be used in grant announcements, media releases and other public documents, and by funding partners (where applicable) to determine whether the research proposal meets their priorities for funding.
  - Use simple terms that can be understood by the general public.
- The Plain English Summary is **not** an opportunity to provide additional track record information.

Leadership Example: *Gabriel Belz – Successful Applicant*

> Immunity is essential for life. Harnessing the immune system to drive increased protection against disease has never been more urgent than now. Achieving this requires understanding the cues that regulate the activation of immune cells and the wiring needed for them to function efficiently and defeat pathogens. My work aims to unravel this complex network to harness the immune switches that will facilitate the future development of therapeutics and vaccines to treat world disease.

Emerging Leadership Example: *Ibrahim Javed – Successful Applicant*

> My research and recent clinical evidence indicate the involvement of gut-bacteria in the early-onset and accelerated progression of dementia in Alzheimer's Disease. This project will investigate the molecular mechanisms for this toxic communication between gut-bacteria and the brain and develop a nanotechnology-based approach to block this communication. It will open new therapeutic opportunities to control the progression and inhibit the early-onset of dementia in Alzheimer's Disease.

Participating Institutions

Participating Institutions

- UQ must be included in the list.
- If research is conducted in more than one UQ department or at another institution, these should be listed here.
- CIs based at Mater should include ‘Mater Research Institute – UQ’ as the Department (not Mater, Mater Research Institute (MRI), Mater Medical Research Institute (MMRI))

- All organisations other than UQ which participate on your application must confirm that:
  - they are aware of their role and agree to be involved as described in your application.
  - they agree to sign agreements with UQ governing the execution of the project if awarded.

Research Classifications

Research Classification

- The details entered in this section are used to select appropriate peer reviewers for your application. They may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's Funding Profile.
- **Broad Research Area**: select one.
- **Field of Research**: select up to three. A list of FoR codes is available: ANZSRC 2020
- **Peer review areas**: select three.
- **Research keywords**: select five.
  - *Application Keyword Library available from Sapphire landing page → Where to go for assistance → How-to videos → Researcher → My Applications (clickable link to tutorials landing page)*
- **Burden of Disease**: select up to three.
  - All three levels must be filled but *answers can be duplicated across levels if needed*

Ethics

Ethics

- Appropriate selection made for each field (all fields are mandatory and cannot be left blank)

Researcher

See our Frequently Asked Questions Resource and the Guidelines for further detail on eligibility, salary declarations etc.

Researcher - General

- **Role** should be *"Chief Investigator A"*
- CI must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen with a special visa category status. Answer must be "*Yes"* here.
- CI must certify that any time overseas will be in accordance with the guidelines. Answer must be *"Yes"* here.

Researcher – Category and Level: General Tips

- All applicants should take care in drafting their justification, even if they clearly align with the years post-PhD and academic level listed in the Statement of Expectations.
- The statement of expectations provides a *broad benchmark* – the justification allows you to position yourself where you think you sit.
- Previous NHMRC grants/fellowships might impact the level at which you may apply (see Guidelines Section 4.3.5 and Appendix F for explanation of how previous grants/fellowships affect level selection).

Salary Declarations: Workload

For academic applicants:

- Select Full Time if you intend to spend ≥0.8 FTE on research.
- If you are an academic who spends ≥0.2 FTE on teaching/administration, select ‘Full Time’. If the grant is awarded, NHMRC allows you to either (a) transfer to a full-time (≥0.8 FTE) research load or (b) transfer to a part-time (professional) Investigator Grant salary to cover the FTE spent on research.

For clinician-researcher applicants:

- If you intend to transition to a full-time ≥80% FTE research role, select Full Time.
- If you intend to continue in a clinical role while conducting research at 0.2-0.8 FTE, select Part-Time (Professional).
  - Input the FTE you will spend on research (0.2-0.8) and select RSP (full or proportional). Note that the RSP cannot be increased after the grant is awarded; we recommend requesting the full RSP.

Salary Declarations: Requesting salary?

Relevant information from Guidelines

- *3.1. - NHMRC expects that researchers who receive a salary from their institution will not apply for a salary from NHMRC.*
- *3.3.4. – Applicants are not entitled to salary support for the life of the grant if, on 1 January 2027, they will be a Director/CEO of a medical research institute, university- or hospital-based research centre/institute, or an academic with institutional research leadership roles (including research administration).*
- *4.3.3. – Current NHMRC grantees who are drawing salary support via a Personnel Support Package (PSP) will be required to cease drawing this salary support from the existing NHMRC grant(s) by 1 January 2027.*
- *4.3.4. – CIAs in receipt of an Investigator Grant salary are not eligible to concurrently receive salary support from non-NHMRC grants that totals >20% of the value of the awarded Investigator Grant salary*.
- *4.3.4. – All salary declarations must be correct at the time of application and representative of the full lifespan of the active non-NHMRC grant(s), not based upon prospective conditions if an applicant is awarded an Investigator Grant. CIAs must not plan to relinquish their salary should their Investigator Grant be successful. Should an Investigator Grant be awarded and a non-NHMRC grant salary be relinquished, responsibility for salary will not be transferred to the NHMRC.*

Salary Declarations: Requesting salary?

Sapphire response item: *In accordance with sections 3.1, 3.3.4 and section 4.3 of the Guidelines, indicate if you are requesting a salary.*

If:

- you receive a salary from UQ, **or**
- on 1 January 2027, you will be a Director/CEO of a medical research institute, university- or hospital-based research centre/institute, or an academic with institutional research leadership roles (including research administration), **or**
- you hold a non-NHMRC grant(s) with a salary component greater than 20% of the Investigator Salary at the level you are applying for, AND this salary funding will not cease prior to the expected Investigator Grant end date (31 December 2031), **or**
- you do not require a salary;

then select 'I am not requesting a salary' **and** select the option that best represents why you are not requesting a salary.

Salary Declarations: Requesting salary?

Sapphire response item: *In accordance with sections 3.1, 3.3.4 and section 4.3 of the Guidelines, indicate if you are requesting a salary.*

If:

- you do not receive a salary from UQ, **and**
- on 1 January 2027, you will not be a Director/CEO of a medical research institute, university- or hospital-based research centre/institute, or an academic with institutional research leadership roles (including research administration), **and**
- you do not hold a non-NHMRC grant(s) with a salary component greater than 20% of the Investigator Salary at the level you are applying for, OR you do hold such funding, but it will cease prior to the expected Investigator Grant end date (31 December 2031), **and**
- you require a salary;

then select 'I am requesting a salary' **and** answer the subsequent items as shown on the following slide.

Salary Declarations: Requesting salary?

Sapphire response item: *I am receiving a PSP from NHMRC that will not end by 1 January of the year the Investigator Grant is to commence*.

Respond ‘No’ to this item **if**:

- you are not receiving a PSP from NHMRC **or**
- you are receiving a PSP from NHMRC that will end by 1 January 2027 **or**
- you are receiving an NHMRC Fellowship. (e.g., Current Investigator Fellow)

Respond ‘Yes’ to this item **if**:

- you are receiving a PSP from NHMRC **and** it will not end by 1 January 2027.

Salary Declarations: Requesting salary?

Sapphire response item: *I will be receiving salary support from a non-NHMRC grant(s) that will overlap with the Investigator Grant.*

Remember that all salary declarations must be correct at the time of application and representative of the full lifespan of the active non-NHMRC grant(s), not based upon prospective conditions if an applicant is awarded an Investigator Grant. **CIAs must not plan to relinquish their salary should their Investigator Grant be successful.** Should an Investigator Grant be awarded and a non-NHMRC grant salary be relinquished, responsibility for salary will not be transferred to the NHMRC.

Respond 'No' to this item **if**:

- you are not receiving salary support from non-NHMRC grant(s) **or**
- you are receiving salary support from non-NHMRC grant(s) that will end before 1 January 2027.

Respond 'Yes' to this item **if**:

- you are receiving salary support from non-NHMRC grant(s) and will continue to receive that support past 1 January 2027.
- If you respond 'Yes', specify the last date you will be drawing salary from these non-NHMRC grants.

Salary Declarations: Other Grants

Other Grants may affect your eligibility to hold your Investigator Grant. Please review the Guidelines and UQ's Frequently Asked Questions for further detail on eligibility. Please contact our office if you have any concerns (NHMRC@research.uq.edu.au).

Salary Declarations: Part-Time candidates

All Part-time candidates:

- Part-time candidates should request a full-time RSP, as this cannot be increased post-award.

Part-time (Professional): for applicants who will need to dedicate FTE to another professional role:

- Applicants are required to organise a written statement from their alternative employer/s using the UQ Research Office Template.
- The awarded FTE and RSP of the grant cannot be increased.

Part-time (Personal): for pregnancy, major illness/injury, or carer responsibilities

- The non-research time is intended to be dedicated to personal circumstances and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities.
- Candidates may request to increase their time commitment (value of the RSP will be unchanged so this should be requested full time).
- **Part-time (personal) candidates should apply for a full-time grant**; if successful, they can request a grant variation to reduce their FTE commitment in-line with their career disruption.

Researcher – Category and Level: What to Include

Your answer in the justification field should include:

- **Academic level, incl. context if relevant**
  - E.g. 1, *I am a level C academic…*
  - E.g. 2, *In recognition of X, I have been appointed at level C earlier than others at the same stage in their career.*
- **Actual years post-PhD**
  - E.g., *I received my PhD X years ago…*
- **Years post-PhD taking into account relative to opportunity & career disruptions**
  - E.g. 1, *Considering career disruptions and relative to opportunity factors, I have been research-active for X years since the award of my PhD…*
  - E.g. 2, *I have conducted research at approximately 0.8 FTE…*
- **Reference to the contextual descriptors from the Statement of Expectations**

Researcher – Category and Level: Statement of Expectations*

	EL1**	EL2**	L1	L2	L3
Academic Level	A	B	C or D	D or E	E
Years Post-PhD	0–5	5–10	10 –15	15–20	20+
Research achievements	Original contribution(s) in their field of expertise	Original contributions **of influence** in their field of expertise	Original contributions **that are of major benefit to research, the health system, and/or the population**	**Substantial** and original contributions that are of major benefit to research, the health system, and/or the population	**Significant** original contributions **of major importance** with impact on research, the health system, and/or the population
Roles – research leadership	Ability to contribute to the conception of research projects	Ability to contribute to the conception and direction of research projects, **while developing independence**	Ability to **independently conceive and direct** research **programs**, **coordinate a team and generate national collaborations**	Experience in **leading** an **independent** research program(**s**) involving **national networks**	Experience in leading a **major** independent research program(s) involving national and **international networks**
Roles – institutional leadership	Contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation	Contributions within their organisation	Contribution(s) within their organisation that extend beyond their research	Leadership roles within their organisation that extend beyond their research	Significant leadership roles within their organisation that extend beyond their research
Standing in the research area	Scientific contributions within their region, state or territory	**National contributions** to their scientific discipline	National contributions to their scientific discipline	National and **possibly international contributions** to their scientific discipline	**National and international contributions through leadership** in their scientific discipline
Responsibilities - supervision	Limited but developing supervision of research staff and students	Experience in supervising **a small research team**	Supervision, **mentoring** and **promotion** of **early and mid-career researchers**	Supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers	**Extensive** supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers

**Career Disruption may also play a contributing factor in determining category and level.*

***It is also expected that Emerging Leadership applicants will be working within a larger team under the mentorship of more senior researchers.*

Category and Level Example: Borderline EL2/L1

Kirsty Short – Successful Applicant 2022

Kirsty was on the border between EL2 and L1, given she was under 10 years post-PhD, but a Level C academic. Her successful justification was therefore based around:

1. Why she did NOT meet the expectations for L1.
2. Why she did meet the expectations for EL2.
3. Context surrounding how she was a level C academic less than 10 years post-PhD

Clearly Identifies year post-PhD and Academic Level

Justification

I completed my PhD in March 2013 (i.e. less than 10 years ago) and I was only recently promoted[3] to a level C academic. Accordingly, I have had limited opportunity to supervise early and mid-career researchers[1]. Specifically, I am currently the supervisor of one post-doctoral fellow[2] and due to my limited time as a group leader I have yet to supervise any PhD students to completion. I am also still very much an emerging leader in infectious disease on a national and international scale. I have received numerous awards indicating my emerging leader status including UQ Faculty of Science Rising Star award (2020) and the ESWI Young Scientist Innovation Award (2020). Similarly, my contributions to my department include activities such as organising the seminar series[2] rather than membership of regulatory or management committees[1]. Accordingly, I believe that I best suit the criteria for an EL2 applicant.

Statement of Expectations Emerging Leadership 2

It is expected that EL2 Investigator Grant recipients will typically be between **5 and 10 years post-PhD** (or equivalent, see section 4.8) and appointable at **Academic Level B (or equivalent)**, and be recognised for their expertise in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions of influence in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception and direction of research projects, while developing independence
- experience in supervising a small research team[2]
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, community leadership, peer review and professional societies)
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series[2] etc.

It is also expected that Emerging Leadership applicants will be working within a larger team under the mentorship of more senior researchers.

Statement of Expectations Leadership Level 1

It is expected that L1 Investigator Grant recipients will typically be between **10 and 15 years post-PhD** (or equivalent, see section 4.8) and appointable at **Academic Level C or D (or equivalent)**, and be national authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research, the health system, economy and/or the health of the population
- ability to independently conceive and direct research programs, coordinate a team of researchers and generate national collaborations
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, peer review, research advisory boards or professional societies)
- supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers[1]
- contribution(s) within their department, centre, institute or organisation that extend beyond their research e.g. membership of regulatory or management committees[1].

Relative to Opportunity – Career Stage

If you do not hold a PhD, contact RO for equivalency check. See FAQ for further information.

Sapphire response item: *Do you hold a PhD or level 10 Criteria of Australia Qualification?*

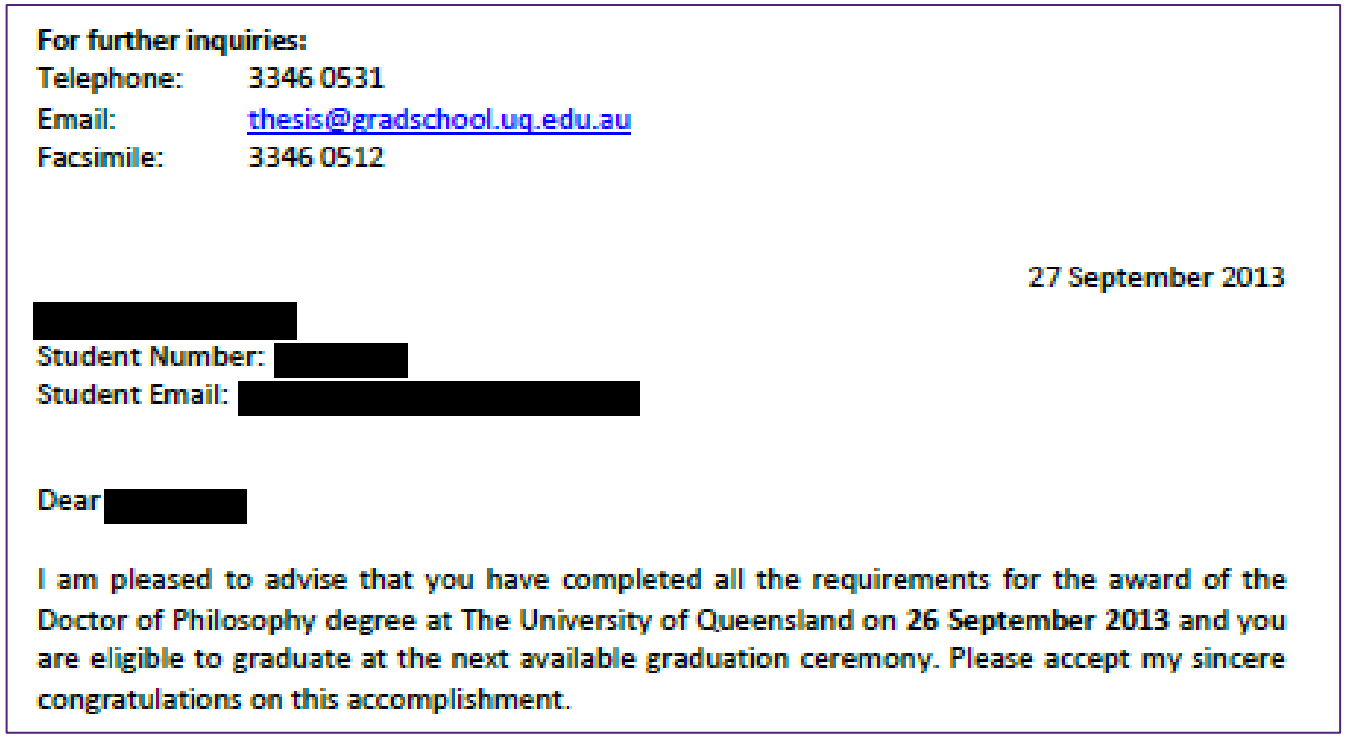
- Answer must be “Yes”
- Input your PhD thesis pass date, **not** conferral date (see below and next slide)

Sapphire response item: *My Administering institution holds evidence of my PhD thesis pass date or confirms that in its judgement, my qualification or research experience meets the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*.

- Answer must be “Yes”

- **Emerging Leaders must send the UQ Research Office this evidence.** Please advise UQ RO if you believe we already hold this evidence on file from a previous application.
- Pass vs Conferral vs Graduation:
  - Pass date = the date on which your PhD thesis was passed / you met the requirements for your degree.
  - Conferral date = the date on which your awarding university signed off on your award.
  - Graduate date = the date of the formal ceremony at which you received the documentation of your award.
- The NHMRC requires that you specify the **pass date**. This date will be specified in an email or letter advising you that you met the requirements of your degree. See example letter on next slide.

Relative to Opportunity – Career Stage



For further inquiries:
Telephone: 3346 0531
Email: thesis@gradschool.uq.edu.au
Facsimile: 3346 0512

27 September 2013

[redacted]
Student Number: [redacted]
Student Email: [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am pleased to advise that you have completed all the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy degree at The University of Queensland on **26 September 2013** and you are eligible to graduate at the next available graduation ceremony. Please accept my sincere congratulations on this accomplishment.

Example of a UQ Degree Requirements Met letter issued by the Graduate School upon fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a PhD. Note that the letter is dated 27 September 2013, but the pass date is 26 September 2013.

Relative to Opportunity – Career Overview

- Answers must be from last 10 years only (from 30 July 2015* to 30 July 2025)
  - For any appointments/roles that started prior to the 10-year period, list the start date as 30 July 2015.
  - All appointments must have an end date on or prior to the grant close date 30 July 2025.
- All fields must be complete for each entry.
- Each entry must have at least one career context category selected.
- Any entry where the research active period is more than 0 must have “Research” selected as one of the career context categories.
- Approximate Full-Time Equivalent Research Active Period (years) is the time in years spent on research only during the period for that entry.
  - E.g., If the position was a post-doc working 0.5 FTE, from 1 Jan 2021 to 30 Jun 2021, the approximate Full-Time Equivalent Research Active Period (years) would be 0.25 (6 months*0.5 = 3 months = 0.25 yrs).
- Where relevant, time spent completing a PhD should be included in the calculation of application FTE research-active years.

*allowing for eligible career disruptions

Relative to Opportunity – Career Context

- This section provides context to the summary career overview in the preceding section.
- Summarise your engagement in research over the past 10 years (roles, responsibilities, time in active research, productivity) and any relative to opportunity context (any career context category other than Research selected in the preceding section), and any other impacts on your research achievements in each role.
- Applicants must not include circumstances considered under career disruption in this section, as they are covered separately in the career disruption section that follows.

Do	Don't
• Be specific. • Date all relative-to-opportunity events by month and year. • Include the impact of an interruption or impediment that extends beyond the duration of the causative event.	• Include a summary of projects and outputs. • Include research activity as an undergraduate. • Include circumstances considered under Career Disruption. • Expand on confidential details.

Career Disruption

- Declare any eligible career disruptions over the last 10 years (from 30 July 2015).
- Eligible disruptions are those that overlap with the 10-year assessment period (30 Jul 2015 to 30 Jul 2025) and involve a continuous absence from work for periods of **90 calendar** days or more due to:
  - Pregnancy
  - Major illness/injury
  - Carer responsibilities
- If a long-term partial return to work was formalised with the applicant's employer due to one or more of the three reasons above, the total disruption must be at least 90 days.
- Ensure you adjust the 10-year assessment window accordingly:
  - Applicants may include publications immediately preceding the 10-year assessment timeframe commensurate with the period of their eligible career disruption(s). For example, if an applicant has a 90-day career disruption, they may include publications during the three months preceding the 10 years up to the application close date (see career disruption calculator available on the UQ Investigator Grants webpage).
- Supporting documentation for all career disruptions must be forwarded to the Research Office.
- Specific, confidential details of the circumstances should not be provided.

Relative to Opportunity & Career Disruption Example 1 (reduced FTE + career disruption)

Impact can be beyond immediate causative event

Relative to Opportunity

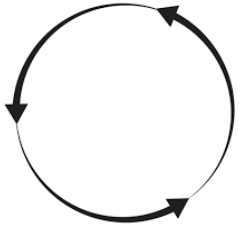
Start Date	End Date	Job Title	Career Disruption
1/12/2013	1/12/2019	Institute Director, Weetangara Institute of Medical Research	No
		Career Context categories	**Approximate FTE research active (years)**
		Research, Professional responsibilities	1.50
Start Date	**End Date**	**Job Title**	**Career Disruption**
1/12/2012	30/11/2013	Director Drug Development, Gungahlin Sciences Pty Ltd	No
		Career Context categories	**Approximate FTE research active (years)**
		Professional responsibilities	0.00
Start Date	**End Date**	**Job Title**	**Career Disruption**
1/12/2009	30/11/2012	Director of Clinical Research, City Hospital	Yes
		Career Context categories	**Approximate FTE research active (years)**
		Research, Other circumstances	2.30

Overall estimated FTE actively spent in research: 3.8 Years

Career Context

I am a recognised expert in cancer research and have demonstrated excellent research productivity despite limited opportunities to conduct research. I achieved significant health and economic outcomes through my internationally renowned cancer clinical trials. In the formative years relevant to this summary (Dec 2009-12) I was impacted by 0.75FTE jury duty (Jan-Mar 2010) and flood damage to my lab (Oct-Dec 2011) reducing my research capacity to 0.25FTE for this period. The flood destroyed my experimental drug supplies and patient samples, setting back my research program by several years. I nevertheless achieved some productivity (albeit reduced) by leveraging the capabilities of my long-standing research group of 5 postdocs and 8 PhD students, to re-establish the program and to explore alternative lines of enquiry. Although my one-year secondment to industry (Dec 2012-2013) impacted my publication outputs, I used the opportunity to further my clinical trials and drug development and commercial outcomes (see Impact statement). I have spent the last six years (Dec 2013-Dec 2019) in management roles with significant administrative responsibility (0.75 FTE), including workforce management, health policy advice and development of strategic plans. My engagement in scientific research was limited to occasional, but frequently cited, technical input and occasional collaborations, in the absence of research staff or funding.

If research is not selected as a career context category, research FTE is 0



- All three sections must be consistent
- Specific dates and FTEs are given in all

Career Disruption

Is this researcher making a career disruption claim?

Yes

Start Date	End Date	Reason	FTE Equivalent
1/03/2012	31/10/2012	Major illness/injury	0.5
	Day Count	**Impact**	
	122.0	Part-time resumption of role/part-time due to major illness at 50% FTE: Although I maintained some productivity during my illness, it prevented my attendance at conferences and limited my opportunity for collaborations. It has also affected progress on a major NHMRC international collaborative grant.	
	Evidence		
	Yes		

Specific, confidential details of the circumstances do not need to be provided i.e. “major illness” is enough

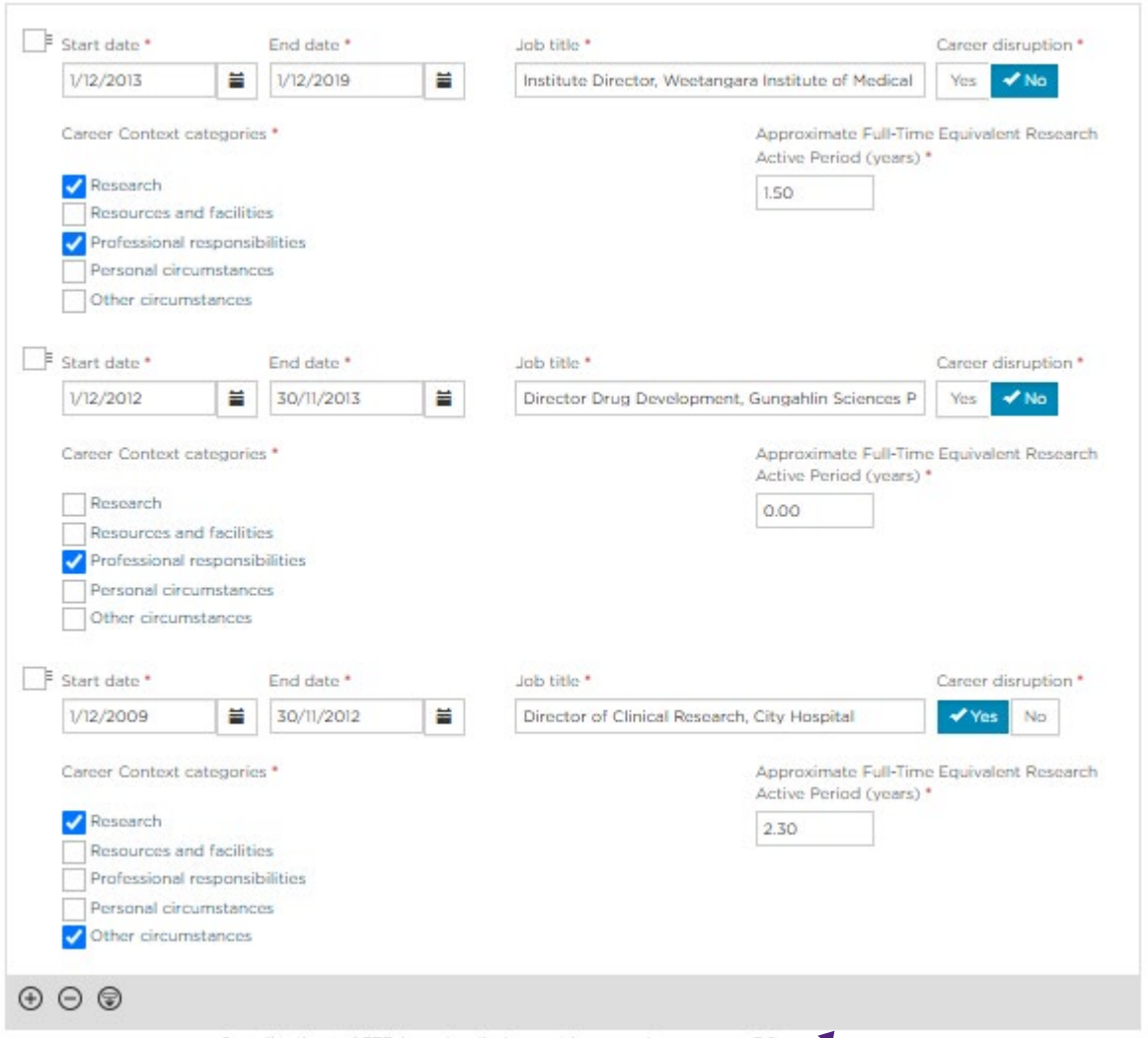
**example adapted from NHMRC Guidelines*

Relative to Opportunity & Career Disruption Example 1: How was it calculated?

- 01/12/2013 – 01/12/2019 = 6 years
- 0.75 FTE spent in management = 4.5 years (*2190 days * 0.75 = 1642.5 days; percentage of 365 days = 4.5*)
- 6 – 4.5 = **1.50 years Research Active**

- Full time in industry = **0 years Research Active**

- 1/12/2009 – 30/11/2012 = 3 years
- 0.75FTE jury duty for 3 months = 0.18years interruption (*90 days * 0.75 = 67.5 days; 67.7 days as a percentage of 365 days = 0.18*)
- 0.75FTE interruption from flood damage for 3 months = 0.18 years interruption (*90 days * 0.75 = 67.5 days; 67.7 days as a percentage of 365 days = 0.18*)
- 0.5FTE career disruption from illness for 8 months = 0.33 years interruption (*244 days * 0.5 = 122 days; 122 days as a percentage of 365 days = 0.33*)
- Total interruption = 0.7 years *(0.18 + 0.18 + 0.33)*
- 3 years – 0.7 **= 2.3 years Research Active**



- Total is calculated for you (career disruption days are also calculated for you)

**example adapted from NHMRC Guidelines*

Relative to Opportunity & Career Disruption Example 2 (full-time career)

Start Date	End Date	Job Title	Career Disruption
1/12/2010	1/12/2017	Postdoctoral Researcher, Kaleen University	Yes
		Career Context categories	Approximate FTE research active (years)
		Research	6.90
Start Date	End Date	Job Title	Career Disruption
2/12/2017	1/12/2020	Senior Postdoctoral Researcher, Kaleen University	Yes
		Career Context categories	Approximate FTE research active (years)
		Research	2.20

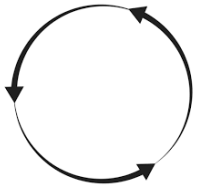
Overall estimated FTE actively spent in research: 9.1 Years

Career disruptions should be taken into account in your approximate FTE research active (years), but are NOT a career context category (because they are covered in the dedicated career disruption section)

If the person has been full-time throughout their career, the career context section should still be used to give a brief summary of the career. Relative to opportunity considerations can be mentioned here.

Career Context

I am a full-time researcher and have demonstrated an increasing trajectory of high quality research outputs (2012 onwards_, compared to the formative stages as an independent researcher, once I was able to establish my own research laboratory and employ a research assistant (i.e. increased resources). Following my return to work from a major illness in 2018, I re-established my research program by training new research personnel and renewing international collaborations. This rebuilding phase meant that the outputs of my research began to be realised from mid-2019 onwards.



All three sections must be consistent

Career Disruption

Is this researcher making a career disruption claim?

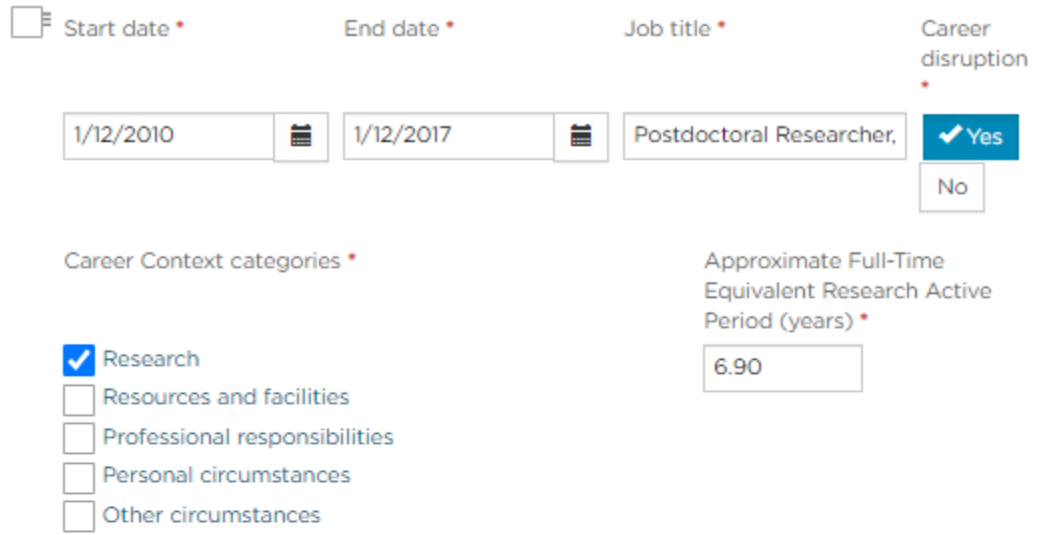
Yes

Start Date	End Date	Reason	FTE Equivalent
1/10/2017	1/10/2018	Major illness/injury	1
	Day Count	Impact	
	365	I took 12 months leave to address a major illness, which resulted in a complete hiatus from research. During this period, I was unable to attend conferences and establish new collaborations which impacted my ability to complete my research projects and delayed publication of results.	
	Evidence		
	Yes		

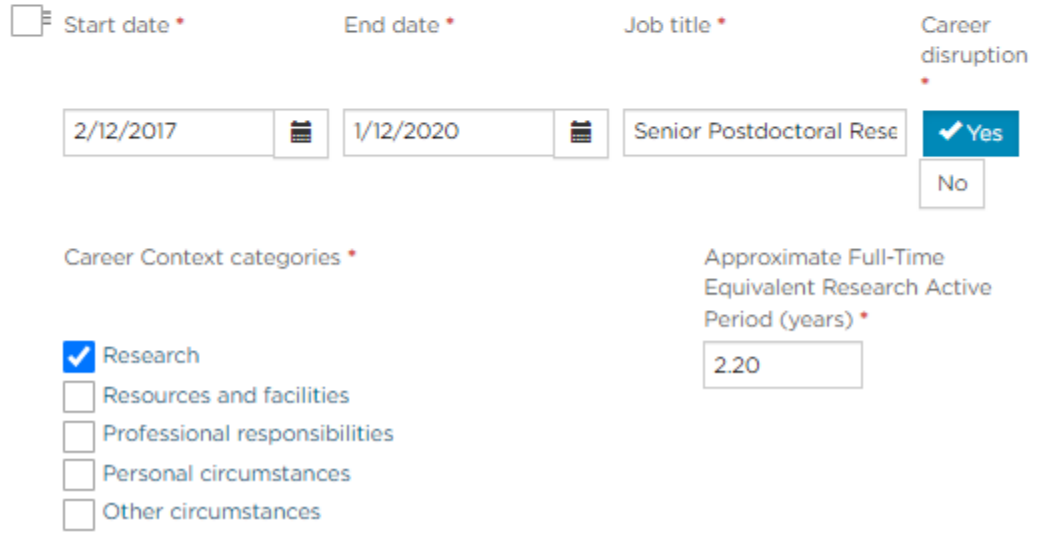
**example adapted from NHMRC Guidelines*

Relative to Opportunity & Career Disruption Example 2: How was it calculated?

- 1/12/2010 = 01/12/2017 = 7 years
- Career disruption due to illness Oct-Dec 2017 = 2 months disruption (60/365 = 0.08)
- **7 years - 0.08 years = 6.9 research active**



- 2/12/2017 – 01/12/2020 = 3 years
- Career disruption due to illness Dec 2017 – October 2017 = 10 months disruption (300/365 = 0.8)
- **3 years - 0.8 years = 2.2 years research active**



**examples adapted from NHMRC Guidelines*

Strategic Priorities and Funding Partners

Strategic Priorities and Funding Partners

- These other funding organisations may also consider your application for funding. **Please only select organisations that relate to your area of research**.
- Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks (FIIRN): The FIIRN supplement is available to Emerging Leadership (EL1 and EL2) grant recipients who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to use for international collaboration purposes.
- If you have selected “Yes” to FIIRN, you must justify the use of funds for travel/collaborative purposes against the FIIRN goals:
    - To improve the health of Indigenous people through research between NHMRC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Health Research Council of NZ, as intended under the Tripartite Agreement
    - To support NHMRC’s strategic objective of building capacity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

Partner Funding

Partner	Eligibility	Number available	Other Information
Cancer Council Queensland	Cancer-focussed EL1 75% of planned research is conducted at institutions in QLD	Up to four	$150,000 per year for 5 years ($50,000 for research costs and $100,000 for salary).
Cerebral Palsy Alliance	Cerebral Palsy-specific	One	Demonstrated commitment to and a track record in cerebral palsy research.
MS Australia	MS-specific EL1 and EL2 only **Must also submit an application to MS Australia**	Up to two	Top-up funding: EL1: $10,000 - $15,000 p.a. EL2: $20,000 p.a. for 5 years.

Top 10 in 10

Track Record – Top 10 in 10

The assessment of publications will be against the category descriptors at **Table 2** of Appendix B in the guidelines

- Up to 10 publications must be selected from within the past 10 years (from 30 July 2015*)
- You may use ALLCAPs to differentiate your name in the author line.
- Metrics must not be included in the top 10 list, but should be included in the justification
- We recommend selection of *at least* one recent publication (last two years) as indication that there is sustained influence/impact and career trajectory.
- You are to provide separate justifications for each citation entry.
- Justifications should ideally include:
  - Introductory/concluding statement to contextualise career total publications, citations and other key metrics (can be included under Leadership if it does not fit here.)
  - What was the state of the field before the paper?
  - What the paper demonstrated?
  - What was your contribution?
  - Evidence of influence on the field and beyond
  - Evidence of outcomes/impact
  - Key metrics for each paper

See Key Findings Resource for Benchmarking Statistics.

Identify your top-performing papers through the Library.

*accounting for eligible career disruptions

Track Record – Top 10 in 10

- Citation fields are a maximum of 500 characters including spaces and line breaks.
- Explanation fields are a maximum of 1000 characters including spaces and line breaks.

Track Record – Types of Publications

NHMRC accepts 10 types of publications: Accepted for Publication; Books/Chapters; Editorials; Journal Articles (Original Research); Journal Articles (Review); Letters to the Editor; Preprints; Research Report – commissioned by the Government, Industry or Other; Technical Report; and Textbook.

A preprint is a complete and public draft of a scientific document, yet to be certified by a journal through peer review. To be considered in this category, a preprint:

- must be available in a recognised scientific public archive or repository such as arXiv, bioRxiv, Peer J Preprints, medRxiv, etc.
- should uniquely identifiable via a digital object identifier (DOI); for preprints that are incrementally updated as work progresses, each version should have a unique DOI and only the latest version of the work should be included in the grant application.

If the work contained in a preprint is subsequently published in a peer-reviewed journal, this should be updated in the publication list in Sapphire to avoid double reporting of outputs (even though upon publication, many authors retain an Open Access ‘post-print’, or archive copy of their work to preserve and make available the intellectual content of their work).

Track Record – Top 10 in 10 Example

Citation: Horikoshi M, et al (joint 1st; 2016). Genome-wide associations for birth weight and correlations with adult disease. Nature; 538(7624):248-252.

Explanation: We discovered[3] 54 novel[5] genetic variants associated with BW. We demonstrated the relationship between low-BW and increased risk of cardio-metabolic disease was predominantly mediated by genetics; I led[4] this aspect of the research, for which the paper is best known. C=290, FWCI=8.1[6]

Citation: Hwang LD, et al (corresponding/senior[1]; 2019[2]). Two-sample MR to investigate a causal effect of maternal lipid concentrations on offspring birth weight. Int J Epidemiol;48(5):1457-1467.

Explanation: First[5] application of[3] my novel method[5] to assess causality between maternal exposures and offspring outcomes using GWAS summary results statistics. I designed[4] the study, interpreted the data and wrote the manuscript. C=19, FWCI=2.7[6]

1. Additional authorship information can be given in the citation section
2. At least one recent publication has been selected (for this round 2020, 2021)
3. What the paper demonstrated
4. The applicant's contribution
5. Evidence of importance, outcomes, impact, and influence
6. Key metrics for each paper

**Nicole Warrington – Successful Applicant*

The University Of Queensland AUSTRALIA | CREATE CHANGE

Research Impact and Pathway to Impact

Research impact and pathway to impact

Applicants are assessed based on:

- the reach and significance of the impact (10%)
- the applicant's contribution to realising the impact (10%)

NHMRC Identifies 4 types of Impact

- Knowledge
- Health
- Economic
- Social

Applicants may include multiple programs of research within **a single coherent impact narrative** to demonstrate research impact(s) across **one or more of the four types of impact**.

The Impact case study is discussed in one 8000-character field, with an additional 2000-character field to provide evidence of research impact.

Research Impact

The assessment of impact will be against the category descriptors at **Tables 3-5** of Appendix B in the guidelines

Detailed advice on Research Impact can be found in the NHMRC Investigator Guide Research Impact Case Study document available on our website.

Key points are:

- A strong case for one type of impact is better than a weak case for several types.
- Claims should be substantiated with qualitative or quantitative evidence.
- Impact is in the past. Do not include speculation about potential future impact.
- Provide robust, verifiable evidence; quality is more important than quantity.
- Both sub-criteria are still assessed separately therefore equal weight should be given to each.

The following slides include examples of Research Impact responses from prior rounds, when impact was assessed across three fields. They are provided as guidance only and do not reflect the application format for the 2026 round.

Impact, Leadership Level Example Field 1: Reach and significance of the research impact

David Craik, Successful Applicant

Opening paragraph sets the scene, establishes the context and significance and gives and overview of the program

My research program on the discovery and applications of ultra-stable cyclic peptides has shifted the paradigm[1] for the use of peptides in drug design and agriculture. Before my program, peptides were considered too unstable or not sufficiently bioavailable to be useful as drug leads, despite their potent bioactivity and exquisite selectivity for receptor targets. The program's discoveries on cyclotides and related cyclic peptides is a step-change[1], not only in academia, but also in the pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. Specifically, the program led to:

Followed by a description of the impacts (specific to the type of impact selected)

(a) new knowledge in the field of peptide science and the creation of the new discipline of 'cyclotides' that is recognised internationally[4] by citations, awards and major conference invitations.

(b) significant influence beyond academia, with cyclotides now commercialised as eco-friendly insecticides (2017 Innovate Ag, Australia) and entering human clinical trials for the treatment of multiple sclerosis (2019, Cyxone, Sweden).

(c) the development of the new industrial process of 'plant biopharming' for producing peptide therapeutics via the establishment of the Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Facility for Producing Pharmaceuticals in Plants (2015, UQ).

Followed by a description of the reach and significance of those impacts, with verifiable evidence

This program is documented in 640 publications from my group (83% in top quartile by citation, SciVal, March 2021). It has international and cross-disciplinary reach, attracting >30,000 citations from 128 countries[2] in 86 different subject areas[3] (WoS, March 2021), demonstrating that my research translates to many fields other than my core area of chemistry.

The significance of my program's impact lies in knowledge generation, methodology development and translational uptake via:

• the deposit of more than 170 peptide and protein structures in the Protein Data Bank (PDB).

• the creation and maintenance since 2006/7 of two public databases, CyBase and ConoServer, which serve peptide science and toxinology internationally (>6000 hits/day).

• uptake of research tools and techniques, with our protocols for making cyclic peptides now widely used by other labs and companies around the world (eg PMID 24918986, 77 cites).

• uptake of the research by other disciplines[3] – a cyclotide-containing insecticide is approved by the APVMA for the protection of cotton, nut and vegetable crops (Innovate Ag).

The significance and reach are further demonstrated by an array of international collaborations[2] (joint publications with >400 researchers in 42 countries) and with the program's publications being cited in more than 380 patent documents. The importance of this work has led many companies, including the world's largest pharmaceutical (Pfizer) and agbiotech (Syngenta) companies to seek collaboration with my group for guidance on making peptides stable and/or orally bioavailable. International (Cyclogenix, Cyxone) start-up companies have been formed based on the knowledge my program has generated to create ultrastable cyclic peptides.

NHMRC Category Descriptors for Knowledge Impact: paradigm changing[1] development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised across multiple countries[2], (b) significant influence beyond the specific field[3] of research or (c) the development of a new field(s)[4] of research that has been recognised across multiple countries/beneficiaries

Impact, Leadership Level Example Field 2: Research program's contribution to the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence

David Craik, Successful Applicant

Opening gives a brief overview of the research program

The research program was borne from a need to identify new molecules to support human and agricultural sustainability. It aimed to identify untapped opportunities in the natural world and focussed on peptides, critical players in plant and animal physiology, from germination, growth and defence.

Contextualises the field

The program can be put in context by noting that conventional peptides and proteins are synthesized in cells, initially as linear chains of amino acids. These chains typically fold into complex three-dimensional shapes dictated by the amino acid sequence, and these shapes largely determine a protein's function. My research program discovered that there are new classes of naturally occurring peptides and proteins that have a critical post-translational modification- a peptide bond that links their termini to form a circle. This modification engenders cyclic peptides with exceptional stability to heat or enzyme digestion. This stability has paved the way[2] for peptides to be used as drugs, as the program developed ways of cyclising a broad range of peptides.

Followed by an explanation of what the research program did/discovered and how it contributed to the impacts discussed in Field 1

The program comprises a cohesive body of work involving innovative use of peptide chemistry, structural biology, transcriptomics and drug design to discover new cyclic peptides, determine their structures and functions and use the new knowledge for applications in medicine and agriculture.

The major contributions of the research program include:

(a) the discovery of cyclotides[2], the largest known family of circular proteins and their associated biosynthetic pathways (PMID 10600388, 783 cites; PMID 7703226, 461 cites[1]).

(b) The demonstration that natural peptides (eg peptide toxins from animal venoms) can be re-engineered via cyclisation (PMID 20533477, 288 cites[1]) to make them orally active; the program developed an orally active conotoxin 150-times more potent than the 'gold standard'[2] drug gabapentin in an animal pain assay.

(c) The development of the concept of molecular grafting (PMID 24147816, 119 cites; PMID 28249194, ESI highly cited paper 2019[1]) to introduce a desired therapeutic activity into a stable peptide framework capable of penetrating cells and reaching targets previously considered to be 'undruggable'[2].

The program continues to grow via a network of national and international collaborations and has impacted across multiple countries (44% of publications in the last 10 years involving international partners, InCites, March 2021[1]), including joint publications with industry- Pfizer, Roche, Syngenta, Takeda, AstraZeneca, Genentech, Novartis, Novo Nordisk (InCites, March 2021[1]). Its influence has additionally been recognised by prestigious US, European and Asian awards (as detailed below).

In summary, my program has discovered new classes of peptides[2], generated new knowledge on their structure and function, and used this information to design and chemically re-engineer new classes of peptide-based drug leads and agricultural pest control agents, in the process opening up a new field[2] of academic research.

NHMRC Category Descriptors for Knowledge Impact: Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence[1] that the applicant's research program made an exceptional contribution[2] to the knowledge Impact

In developing this section it can help to think about the story behind each of your key publications – you can then use them as substantiating evidence

Impact, Leadership Level Field 3: Applicant's contribution to the research program, supported by corroborating evidence.

David Craik, Successful Applicant

Explains the contributions **you** made

Explains the merit of your contribution relative to your field (and relative to opportunity if relevant)

Evidence used is specific to the program, not about track record in general[3]

I conceived and have led the research program from when I joined UQ in 1995, including making the underpinning discoveries, attracting funding for the program and setting its scientific direction. Specifically, I discovered, named, and have driven[2] applications of cyclotides and their associated enzymes for 25 years and am known internationally as the founder of this field[2]. These ultrastable peptides have facilitated new opportunities for peptides in drug design[2]. Of my 750 career publications (h-index: 108; 43,600 GS cites[1]), 640[1] are associated with this peptide research program[3].

To fund this program, I have been awarded 23 NHMRC grants as CIA, along with 8 non-CIA NHMRC grants and 28 ARC grants as CIA[1] in the peptide field[3]. These grants have been highly successful. For example, my NHMRC project grant on the cyclisation of a chlorotoxin to explore its use as a tumour imaging agent in collaboration with the Fred Hutchison Cancer Centre in Seattle was featured in NHMRC's "Ten of the Best" in 2015[1, 2]. Further evidence of my leading contribution to this program is that in the last 10 years, I was awarded a NHMRC Senior Principal Research Fellowship (2012–15) and ARC Australian Laureate Fellowship (2016–20), the most prestigious Fellowships[2] of the NHMRC and ARC, respectively.

I established a network of national and international collaborations to facilitate this program and my leadership is demonstrated by 164 invited or plenary lectures[1] in the last decade (in 29 counties across 4 continents[1,2]). Amongst them was a keynote at the prestigious Bürgenstock meeting[1] in Switzerland in 2017 and the Visions in Chemistry meeting in Copenhagen in 2018, both typically 'once in a lifetime' invites whose invitees regularly include Nobel Laureates (eg Ben Feringa spoke at the Visions meeting). I have also established and led major collaborations with pharmaceutical companies (funding >$8 million)[1] and mentored a generation of new researchers in this field.

Additional evidence of my contributions includes:

• WoS (March 2021)[1] ranks me as the most productive scientist[1] in the world[2] in the field of 'cyclic peptides'[3] and the most productive scientist in Australia in the broad field of Biology & Biochemistry.

• I am ranked in the top 1% for citations[1] over the last decade in multiple separate disciplines, including Biology & Biochemistry and Pharmacology & Toxicology (ESI, March 2021).

• I am a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science[1]

• International prizes in peptide science[3] include[1]:

2011 American Chemical Society Ralph F. Hirschmann Award in Peptide Chemistry
2012 Elected Fellow of Royal Society of Chemistry
2012 Josef Rudinger Memorial Lecture Award, European Peptide Society
2014 GlaxoSmithKline Award for Research Excellence
2014 Ramaciotti Medal for Excellence in Biomedical Research ($50,000)
2015 Ramaciotti Biomedical Research Award ($1 million)
2015 Vincent du Vigneaud Award, American Peptide Society

NHMRC Category Descriptors:
Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence[1] that the applicant made: an **exceptional** contribution[2] to the research program that led to a knowledge impact

Impact, Emerging Leadership Example Field 1: Reach and significance of the research impact

Opening paragraph sets the scene, establishes the context and significance and gives and overview of the program

Followed by a description of the impacts (specific to the type of impact selected)

Followed by a description of the reach and significance of those impacts, with verifiable evidence

Janni Leung, successful applicant

Substance use is one of the leading causes of disease burden and disability, responsible for over 15% of all disability-adjusted life years of health lost globally and in Australia. There are also major costs to the economy due to lost productivity, injuries, physical health-care, and crime. For example, harmful opioids and cannabis use cost Australia $15.76 and $4.5 billion annually.

My program of research on the epidemiology of substance use has advanced knowledge in global drug epidemiology that reached policy and practice.

The research program had made paradigm changing development[1] through >80 articles, which have recognised impact (18,857 cites, FWCI 32.6, 30% output in the top 1% citation percentile [1]), in my short career (since 2015). It includes 28 highly cited and 4 “hot” papers classed by WoS [2]. Knowledge gained from the work has been used by leading researchers across top Universities worldwide[2], e.g. Harvard, Cambridge, Yale [4]. It has been used in 190 countries[2] across 27 subject areas[3] (e.g. medicine, pharmacology, psychology).

The research findings have been reported in >250 news mentions (e.g. Forbes, Guardian, Yahoo News, New York Times, Canberra Times, The Conversation), 198 policy document mentions (e.g. World Health Organization, 293 Wikipedia mentions (e.g. alcohol and health page), and 27,033 Twitter mentions that reached millions of followers [4].

International agencies[2] including the UN, WHO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have used my work to inform strategies, improve population health, and recommend resource allocations. For example, my work was used by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for a meeting in Vienna in 2016 to discuss the development of new drug policies to reduce drug-related harms across the world. This resulted in reducing the burden imposed by drug dependence and abuse being named a global priority of the UN [5]. Public Health England adopted my data in making substance use a priority (e.g. [6]). The Government of India used my data to make mental and substance use a top priority-India’s Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the first time included adolescence in its child health strategy [7].

[1] Scopus, [2] WoS, [3] Scopus, [4] Altmetric; Feb 21; [5] Sustainable Development Goal 3.5; [6] 2016 Stoptober challenge; [7] 2016 RMNCA Health strategy

NHMRC Category Descriptors for Knowledge Impact: paradigm changing[1] development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised across multiple countries[2], (b) significant influence beyond the specific field[3] of research or (c) the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised across multiple countries/beneficiaries

Impact, Emerging Leadership Example Field 2: Research program's contribution to the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence.

Opening gives a brief overview of the research program and contextualises the field

Followed by an explanation of what the research program did/discovered and how it contributed to the impacts discussed in Field 1

Janni Leung, successful applicant

My research program focuses on the epidemiology and burden of substance use, including alcohol, smoking, cannabis, injecting and other drugs, because they are the leading behavioural risk factors for poor health outcomes with a need for research to inform evidence-based policy decisions. It has generated the evidence required for governments around the world to take action.

The program generated key datasets on disease burden caused by substance use in >200 jurisdictions (e.g. [1]). The data were used in the Global Burden of Disease project to estimate burden for all diseases, leading to a series of 30 publications, 20 in The Lancet, 26 in the top 1% citation percentile[1] [2].

The program of research contributed to knowledge dissemination in conference presentations, media releases, and social media, which attracted broad public, policy and media interest. Contributions to the impact stemmed from invitations to provide expert knowledge on substance use epidemiology to the national media, e.g. in 2020 for an ABC analysis program on cannabis regulation and an SBS feature on the public health effects of cannabis legalization, reaching an audience of over 10 million viewers.

The research program contributed to international efforts to address Global Burden Disease on 369 disease and injuries. Another key international effort to address drug use is the Global Consortium to Advance Data on the Epidemiology and Health Impacts of Illicit Drug Use. The program contributed to forming a collaboration, involving leading national and international institutes at the University of New South Wales, Uni of Bristol, King's College London, and European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the European Union's agency to reduce drug-related harms across Europe.

Bringing together my research on substance use and that of disease burden more broadly was critical in informing UNODC to lobby for making the burden imposed by drug dependence as a global priority. My program's data showed that alcohol, smoking, and drug use were the top risk factors for deaths in the UK and was adopted by Public Health England. My program's findings that substance use and mental disorders accounted for 12% of the total burden among Indian youth aged 15-19 years [3] informed the Government of India's policy to improve adolescent health.

[1] Global nonfatal health outcomes: mental and substance use disorders; 2016; [2] SciVal; Feb 2; [3] Lancet, 388 (1603-1658); 2016[1]

NHMRC Category Descriptors for Knowledge Impact: Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence[1] that the applicant's research program made an exceptional contribution[2] to the knowledge Impact

Impact, Emerging Leadership Example Field 3: Applicant's contribution to the research program, supported by corroborating evidence.

Janni Leung, successful applicant

Explains the contributions **you** made

Explains the merit of your contribution relative to your field (and relative to opportunity if relevant)

Evidence used is specific to the program, not about track record in general[3]

In the research program, I have contributed to international research paper from >150 countries. My emerging leadership in delivering impactful research is evidenced by >80 papers[1] in this research program since PhD in 2015 [1]. From this program of work, I am recognised as a leading scientist in the top 1% most cited[1] in the essential science indicator field of clinical medicine [1]. In contributing to the program, I have supervised >20 research student/intern projects.

My contribution to the research program in the Global Burden of Disease project (2015-17) involved my leading of the analysis on alcohol & substance use burden. Following my PhD in 2015 I was recruited as the only external modeller funded by The Gates Foundation[2] ($106k). I led systematic reviews to identify input data for burden models, reviewed >100,000 data sources, extracted and analysed data from publications and micro-datasets, harmonised data across different studies, and modelled disease burden estimates in every country. I coordinated data analysis with international collaborators and managed protocols and deliverables. I also presented project methods and outputs and delivered final reports. I made recommendations on methods of data extraction and analysis that were used for other diseases and was invited to present my methods and results at U Washington in 2017[1] [2].

My contribution to the research program was recognised by a Fellowship and a project grant at The University of Queensland to continue my research ($245k CI: 2018 & 2019). In 2020, I was invited as an expert consultant ($5k)[1] on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on alcohol and drug use by the QLD Mental Health Commission. I delivered a consultation paper that was released by The Commission as part of its renewed alcohol and other drugs plan. I have been invited to collaborate in international grant applications as CI (e.g. National Institutes of Health grant on alcohol and mental health with the University of Toronto, 2019). My work on gender disparities in drug use achieved an ECR award (USD$1000) at a leading international conference in my field (CPDD, >500 attendees[1], 2018 [3]).

I increased research capacity in this research program by supervising student projects with impactful output, e.g. I supervised the delivery of >25 presentations at leading conferences, including the USA's CPDD [3] and APSAD (leading multidisciplinary organisation for professionals involved in the alcohol and other drug fields), with four student presentation features/recognition by conference awards.

[1] Scopus; Feb 21; [2] YLDs Methods and Estimation Series; IHME, Seattle; 2017; [3] College on Problems of Drug Dependence[1]

NHMRC Category Descriptors:
Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence[1] that the applicant made: an **exceptional** contribution[2] to the research program that led to a knowledge impact

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CREATE CHANGE

Research Leadership

Research Leadership

The assessment of Leadership will be against the category descriptors at **Table 6** of Appendix B.

For the assessment of leadership, applicants are required to outline their work over the past 10 years (since 30 July 2015, accounting for career disruptions) with relevant examples across the four Leadership elements, as relevant:

- Research Mentoring
- Research Policy and Professional Leadership
- Institutional Leadership
- Research Programs and Team Leadership

Key change in 2026

The Leadership response in Sapphire has been condensed from four fields into one.

You are not required to speak to all four elements; rather, your response will be scored according to the clarity of the narrative and strength of the examples you provide.

The following slides include examples of Leadership responses from prior rounds, when leadership was assessed across four fields. They are provided as guidance only.

Research Leadership, Leadership Level Example: Mentoring

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Vicki Flenady, successful applicant

I am a highly effective research leader for academic students and clinician-researchers. I developed and ran a research training program[1] for novice clinicians and RANZCOG trainees for >20 years. I actively engage with and mentor my students and CRE staff, focussing on developing their personal growth and research skills, and seeking out professional and academic opportunities.

I have >20 staff: 10 research fellows/associates, 6 PhDs[1] (principal advisor for 1 international and 5 domestic students) and 3 post-doctoral fellows. I have supervised to completion 7 PhDs (3 as principal advisor [1 NHMRC scholarship]), several masters' and MBBS students and RANZCOG trainee projects. My students have published their work in Q1 journals (BJOG, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Women and Birth) and won competitive academic awards (Australian Government RTP Scholarship; Mater ECR Award; Dr. Laurence Cately Clinical Student Award; UQ RHD Candidate Development Award; PSANZ New Investigator Awards; MP Tracy Davis Bursary Award; UQ School of Public Health Excellence in Research) and grants (UQ ECR Fellowship; NHMRC Co-lead; Australia Project Grant). My post-graduate students have excelled in their research careers (I. Ibiebele - post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Sydney and A. Wojcieszek – WHO consultant).

To build capacity of future researchers, I served as a Cochrane review educator[1] and currently serve as deputy chair of the IMPACT Network[1], overseeing training activities and providing a supportive environment for researchers developing randomised trials in maternal and perinatal health. Further, I have trained and mentored 100+ junior researchers[1] directly or through structured training programs.

I actively participate in diversity/STEM initiatives[1]; I established the Indigenous Reference Group[1] for the Stillbirth CRE and as the 2020 recipient of the Women in Technology Outstanding Achievement Science Award, I encourage the representation of women in STEM[1].

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates **exceptional** performance in:

- supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group

Recommended inclusions (as applicable):

- Current group size
- Number of students currently being supervised.
- Numbers of student completions (numbers).
- Details of honours training.
- Details of postdocs or other staff mentored.
- Professional success of students and postdocs mentored (prizes, Fellowships, positions secured etc.)
- Broader mentorship roles beyond the applicant's own group, as applicable (e.g. Centre leadership, contribution to mentorship initiatives at Centre/School/Faculty/Institute level)
- Participation in STEM/diversity initiatives
- Invites to participate in local/national mentoring/training initiatives and activities (e.g. GO8, AAHMS, etc.)
- Space permitting, may include approaches/ philosophy to mentorship and training.

Research Leadership, Leadership Level Example: Research Policy and Professional Leadership

Recommend a statement (preferable at opening) to reaffirm relative career stage and relative to opportunity

This is not just a list of professional leadership/review roles, it should explain:

- Specific contributions the applicant made in those roles
- evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Answers should be evidence based, including duration of roles, if roles are current or past, frequency of activity, and dates.

Vicki Flenady, successful applicant

As a Level E Academic, I have made an outstanding contribution to stillbirth research. As Scientific Committee chair[2] of ISA (2014-2018) and currently as vice-chair, I developed and updated ISA's 5-year strategic plan (2016-2020), helped establish the Western Pacific Regional Office, and co-hosted the 2020 launch of the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation country-specific stillbirth estimates alongside WHO and UNICEF. The CRE was instrumental in informing the NSAIP, which no other country in the world has, and which drew widespread media attention including in The Guardian, Sydney Morning Herald, and ABC News. In November 2020, our IMPROVE eLearning module was launched by Nicole Flint MP.

As PSANZ President[2] (2011-2013), I established the Policy Sub-committee to strengthen contribution to national policies, practice standards and guidelines for maternal and newborn care, established the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Alliance and led development and updating of bi-national clinical guidelines on comprehensive clinical practice around perinatal death. As IMPACT Network chair (2014-2016), I drove development of the strategic plan, joined the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance and developed and implemented an endorsement system for IMPACT trials.

I review papers for[1] The Lancet, PLoS Medicine, BJOG, and BMJ. I am an editor for BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth and served on the BJOG Editorial Board for a special series on stillbirth. I served on review panels for NHMRC Partnership (2012 and 2013) and CRE (2014 and 2015) grants. I was named Chair of the ISA conferences for 2010 and 2021. I was an invited speaker at 40+ national and international conferences, workshops and expert panel working meetings between 2010 and 2020, including as a Keynote speaker at the Mercy Global Obstetrics Update in 2015 and 2019

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally[1]
- contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level[2]

Recommended inclusions (as applicable):

- Grant review panels and journal editorial roles
- Expert committee roles (including government and non-government)
- Professional societies
- Community engagement
- Health and healthcare policy and practice – government, health agencies, industries.
- Key media activity and coverage
- Conference invitations/attendance (no. of meetings; invites fully funded; plenaries and keynotes)
- Prizes and awards recognising contributions to the field/intellectual leadership (this may also include competitive fellowships and fellowship of learned academies).
- Other evidence of profile/leadership within/beyond the field, including patents, industry links, translation.

Research Leadership, Leadership Level Example: Institutional Leadership

Vicki Flenady, successful applicant

My institutional leadership with Mater and MRI-UQ began with leadership in research management and evolved to leadership in academic research. As Acting Director of Mater Research Support Centre and Mater Mothers Research Program (2008-2011), I led initiatives to enhance effective research across the Mater campus from an operational perspective[1], including training novice clinician researchers; establishing data capture systems to monitor research; promoting collaboration in multicentre trials; setting research priorities; and chairing the scientific committee of the HREC.

As Director of the Translating Research Into Practice (TRIP) Centre (2011-2015), I ran annual symposia[1] with national guest speakers to promote collaboration beyond Mater. I developed the Mater TRIP Fellowships[1] scheme, a competitive round of grant funds to enable health care professionals time off-line to systematically address an important evidence practice gap. I collaborated with the Australasian Cochrane Centre to deliver educational programs in QLD. [1]

In my first two years as head of the Stillbirth CRE, I established formal partnerships with 12 organisations, 4 parent advocacy groups, 4 peak professional bodies and 2 international associations. Since then, we have enhanced collaborations across MRI-UQ, including a network of placental biologists across Australia. In 2018, the CRE was awarded the UQ Faculty of Medicine Collaborators of the Year Award, which recognises teams who have embraced and demonstrated collaboration that has led to significant, tangible outcomes and impactful change and success. With my appointment as co-lead of MRI's Mother and Baby Program, I have developed approaches to enhance multidisciplinary collaboration across the 4 major themes of the institute.

The CRE has been integral in organising and mediating[1] the ISA and PSANZ conferences and has continued to run virtual conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure continued collaboration and research dissemination.

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee[1]

Recommended inclusions (as applicable)

- Leadership (or support) roles in Centres/ key initiatives at UQ, including evidence of initiative success.
- Leadership or supporting roles for School/Centre/Institute initiatives outside the applicant's own group – including specifying the role and value-add of the applicant (especially for Early Career Researchers, Research Training, Women in STEM, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation)
- UQ institutional participation and roles (Committees, working groups, workshops, centrally or locally, institutional roles e.g. Research Integrity Advisors).
- Teaching initiatives (e.g. establishing new courses/articulation pathways, internationalisation, integrity.
- Organising/running seminar series or visitor programs, and conference organising

Research Leadership, Leadership Level Example: Research Programs Team Leadership

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Vicki Flenady, successful applicant

As Director[1] of the Stillbirth CRE, I continue to work alongside other CRE Mater Research investigators to reduce the number of late gestation stillbirths by 20% by 2023. The Stillbirth CRE has grown to 24 organisations in multilateral partnership[2] with parents, parent advocates, health care professionals, researchers, professional colleges, policy makers, peak professional bodies and international associations.

I have >250 publications (>30 Cochrane systematic reviews) with >50 in the last five years. I have authored four book chapters and numerous state-wide and hospital clinical outcome reports. I was a member of the series steering committee[1] for the 2011 and 2016 Lancet Stillbirths Series. I have developed global indicators for maternity and newborn care and evaluation of classification systems for the development of a new WHO classification system for stillbirth and neonatal death. I have developed national and state guidelines pertaining to stillbirth and neonatal death.

The CRE's work has received national and international attention; crucially, we have been instrumental in working with the Australian Federal Government to establish the SNAIP. The Safer Baby Bundle has been successfully implemented across VIC, NSW and QLD, with national rollout ongoing. We have established the Stillbirth CRE as the Western Pacific Regional Office of the ISA, with the focus to expand activities regionally in partnership[2] with the Burnet Institute, Melbourne. We aim to implement the PSANZ stillbirth and neonatal guidelines nationally and internationally.

I have presented at numerous conferences, and have been an Invited Speaker on 20+ occasions, including at the ISA Conferences (annually 2005-2018) and Mercy Perinatal Global Obstetric Update (2019). I was an Invited Plenary Speaker at the International Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Conference in 2012 and 2015. I was promoted to Professor in 2016.

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- conception and direction of a research project or program[1]
- building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.[2]

Recommended inclusions (as relevant)

- Overview of the applicant's/applicant's group's primary research foci, ensuring that leadership/ initiation/direction of program/instrumental role in the program is clearly articulated and evidenced.
- Overview of the profile and international influence of the applicant's work. This may feature key publication stats (if not already covered as an introduction or conclusion to the five best publications), key innovations, grant income, prizes, awards or other accolades.
- Evidence of growth/expansion/uptake of the research program locally, nationally, internationally and across cohorts e.g. research sector, health and industry sectors etc.
- Overview of rising trajectory of the applicant evidencing their calibre and the strong direction/ competitiveness of their research program. Key local/national/overseas collaborations, including key roles in those collaborations in demonstrating leadership.
- Reports generated for health, government and other agencies.
- Development of key infrastructure/ methodologies to pioneer research programs in Australia.
- National/international honorary appointments, plenary invitations/keynote speaker, invited reviews.

Research Leadership, Emerging Leadership Level Example: Mentoring

Jannie Leung, successful applicant

Reaffirms relative to opportunity

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

I am strongly committed to nurturing the next generation of researchers using an inclusive mentoring approach. Since my PhD (Oct 2015), I have supervised 26 research projects (6 PhDs, 3 as primary, 4 Honours, 2 Masters, 2 Medicine, 8 vacation research, 4 placements) spanning disciplines including public health, psychology, pharmacy, and medicine.

I provide opportunities for my students to develop their research outputs and careers. This year, I have supported my team of research students, interns and research assistants in producing and delivering >20 virtual presentations at leading conferences in the substance use epidemiology field, including in USA's CPDD and APSAD (both are leading multidisciplinary organisations in my field).

My students are highly successful, e.g. 3/4 of my Honours students achieving 1st class and receiving scholarships (2019-20). My Master's student (Ellerstrand) presented their research on the global epidemiology of prescription opioid use at the 2017 CPDD Montreal (>500 attendees) and received the Opioid-addiction Research and Clinical Experts award, a prestigious recognition of high quality research in the field. My PhD students (Chiu, Lim) presented their research at 2020 CPDD Florida/online (>500 attendees) on attitudes towards cannabis and received one of 20 ECR awards.

I support my students to publish in high impact journals and outlets (e.g. Mekonen [1], Treatment rates for AUD; Lim [2], Cannabis on social media; in #2 journal in field; top 3% in psychiatry & mental health [3]). Handing down exceptional mentoring I received, I facilitate junior researchers in taking development workshops to enhance their skills and provide mentorship on preparing grants: 7 have obtained university funding to develop cutting-edge research skills that are now being used in our research (e.g. machine learning 2020, causal analysis 2021); Lim was awarded an NHMRC scholarship.

[1] 2020:10.1111/add.15357; [2] 2021:10.1111/add.15424; [3] Scopus Feb 21

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates **exceptional** performance in:

- supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group

Recommended inclusions (as applicable):

- Current group size
- Number of students currently being supervised.
- Numbers of student completions (numbers).
- Details of honours training.
- Details of postdocs or other staff mentored.
- Professional success of students and postdocs mentored (prizes, Fellowships, positions secured etc.)
- Broader mentorship roles beyond the applicant's own group, as applicable (e.g. Centre leadership, contribution to mentorship initiatives at Centre/School/Faculty/Institute level)
- Participation in STEM/diversity initiatives
- Invites to participate in local/national mentoring/training initiatives and activities (e.g. GO8, AAHMS, etc.)
- Space permitting, may include approaches/ philosophy to mentorship and training.

Research Leadership, Emerging Leadership Level Example : Research Policy and Professional Leadership

This is not just a list of professional leadership/review roles, it should explain:

- Specific contributions the applicant made in those roles
- evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Answers should be evidence based, including duration of roles, if roles are current or past, frequency of activity, and dates.

Jannie Leung, successful applicant

As an emerging leader, I consistently demonstrate exceptional research policy and professional leadership nationally and internationally, e.g.

Leader in data science:

I am a member of leading networks[2], e.g. International Population Data Linkage Network, International Society of Substance Use Professionals, statistical reviewer for Lancet Psychiatry. I was invited by the National Data Commissioner to a roundtable discussion[2] on data sharing and release, hosted by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to comment on the legislation on data availability, use, and confidentiality (2018). Through membership of[2] the Australian Real-World Data Network, I contributed to advocacy to access data for research for the Australian Government Productivity Commission and a submission to the National Health Information Strategy calling for a stronger data linkage system (2018, 2020).

Leader in alcohol and drug use:

For the Queensland Mental Health Commission, I delivered a consultation paper[2] to provide evidence on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on alcohol and drug use (2020). This was released by The Commission to inform a renewed Queensland alcohol and other drugs plan. With the California Cannabis Advisory Committee (2020), I was a signatory to the letter to advocate for using empirical data to inform the regulation of high THC cannabis products. The letter was presented to the Californian legislature that recommended an inquiry. I regularly conduct peer review of publications in Q1 journals (e.g. >10 reviews for Lancet Psychiatry) and am assistant editor in two journals. I was peer reviewer for substance use submissions: e.g. NHMCR Assessor (2016), World Congress on Public Health (2016).

Leader in diversity:

As part of the UN International Day of Women and Girls, I engaged in an online social media event by creating content[2] that advocates careers for women in STEM (2016-21).

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally[1]
- contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level[2]

Recommended inclusions (as applicable):

- Grant review panels and journal editorial roles
- Expert committee roles (including government and non-government)
- Professional societies
- Community engagement
- Health and healthcare policy and practice – government, health agencies, industries.
- Key media activity and coverage
- Conference invitations/attendance (no. of meetings; invites fully funded; plenaries and keynotes)
- Prizes and awards recognising contributions to the field/intellectual leadership (this may also include competitive fellowships and fellowship of learned academies).
- Other evidence of profile/leadership within/beyond the field, including patents, industry links, translation.

Research Leadership, Emerging Leadership Level Example: Institutional Leadership

Jannie Leung, successful applicant

I am a leader in diversity. In the Cultural Diversity Working Group[1] (UNSW), I mentor ECRs in other teams from diverse backgrounds. This included providing advice promotion applications (2019-) and running cultural diversity events[1] (2018-). In the Science in Australia Gender Equity strategic meeting[1] at U QLD (UQ), I was invited to speak for researchers with parenting responsibilities (2017) with comments used in our gender equity in science strategy.

I am recognised as a leader in national and international research collaborations. I was invited to contribute to the UQ Global Engagement Strategic Institutional Partnership Plenary roundtable discussion[1] (2019).

I have consistently demonstrated leadership in facilitating and delivering institutional conferences, staff development and seminars to staff and students across research institutes[1]. I was on the UQ School of Public Health Higher Degree conference organising[1] committee across multiple years during my PhD, running a cross-institutional joint conference of >150 registrations. In 2015-16, I invited my UK collaborators from Stirling and Edinburgh Napier for research visits and presentation at school seminars. I served in >5 University-wide events (2015-17), e.g. in a higher degree research expo, in a medical research expo, and on an invited panel to share my experiences and welcome new cohorts of PhD candidates. I organised a workshop[1] for visual analytics and delivered a workshop on systematic reviews and meta-analyses at my School with full attendance (2017-18).

I supervised interns[1] for placements across various disciplines (e.g. medicine, psychology, pharmacy). I also lead my peers and team to provide supervision for the institutional placement programs and have facilitated staff and student matching. I led a journal club[1] of 15 post-docs and research students to discuss current evidence on how to improve population substance use epidemiology estimates.

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee[1]

Recommended inclusions (as applicable)

- Leadership (or support) roles in Centres/ key initiatives at UQ, including evidence of initiative success.
- Leadership or supporting roles for School/Centre/Institute initiatives outside the applicant's own group – including specifying the role and value-add of the applicant (especially for Early Career Researchers, Research Training, Women in STEM, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation)
- UQ institutional participation and roles (Committees, working groups, workshops, centrally or locally, institutional roles e.g. Research Integrity Advisors).
- Teaching initiatives (e.g. establishing new courses/articulation pathways, internationalisation, integrity.
- Organising/running seminar series or visitor programs, and conference organising

Research Leadership, Emerging Leadership Level Example: Research Programs Team Leadership

Establishes relative to opportunity

As an ECR you may not have led the whole program, you can show leadership of specific components

Includes evidence that the applicant's involvement has led to an outcome

Jannie Leung, successful applicant

In under 5 FTE years since PhD, I have led[1] multiple national and international team projects[2], including establishing new research teams (>80 publications & $312k total CI funding as an emerging substance use epidemiology leading researcher).

From 2017, I led the Australian team[1] of a project on alcohol use and depression in collaboration[2] with UNSW (Leung, Peacock, Degenhardt), U Toronto (Rehm) & U California (Martinez) and applied for USD$1.5m (CI) from NIH.

As CIA, I received $35k ECR funding (CI) to lead[1] a longitudinal study following adolescent exposure to various levels of alcohol use with U Melbourne (Patton). I am leading[2] the data-linkage analysis component of a 2021 Centres of Research Excellence - Health Services Research application led by senior NHMRC fellow (Hides).

Additional programs that I have a leading role[2] in include: medicinal cannabis use with the U of Waterloo (Hammond), alcohol-related content on social media with Washington U[2] (CI, applied for USD$50k), and harm reduction from injecting drug use with UNSW, U of Bristol, King's College London, and European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction[2].

I lead[1] research on impactful and pressing population substance use issues. For example, I established[1] a group of junior and senior researchers from my university, WHO, University of Indonesia, and Airlangga[2] University to examine adolescent smoking in South-East Asia. Establishing this group was a direct response to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). My team was awarded $20k (CI) to facilitate research exchanges between team members.

I currently supervise and mentor a team of 12 gender- and culturally-diverse ECRs that includes students, research staff, and postdoctoral fellows. I had a formative role in establishing[1] national (e.g. Data-linkage Alcohol Cohort Study) and international (e.g. Global Consortium on Substance Use and Harms) research teams.

Relevant NHMRC Category Descriptors: Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:

- conception and direction of a research project or program[1]
- building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.[2]

Recommended inclusions (as relevant)

- Overview of the applicant's/applicant's group's primary research foci, ensuring that leadership/ initiation/direction of program/instrumental role in the program is clearly articulated and evidenced.
- Overview of the profile and international influence of the applicant's work. This may feature key publication stats (if not already covered as an introduction or conclusion to the five best publications), key innovations, grant income, prizes, awards or other accolades.
- Evidence of growth/expansion/uptake of the research program locally, nationally, internationally and across cohorts e.g. research sector, health and industry sectors etc.
- Overview of rising trajectory of the applicant evidencing their calibre and the strong direction/ competitiveness of their research program. Key local/national/overseas collaborations, including key roles in those collaborations in demonstrating leadership.
- Reports generated for health, government and other agencies.
- Development of key infrastructure/ methodologies to pioneer research programs in Australia.
- National/international honorary appointments, plenary invitations/keynote speaker, invited reviews.

Knowledge Gain

Knowledge Gain (Grant Proposal)

The assessment of Knowledge Gain will be against the category descriptors at **Table 7** of Appendix B in the guidelines.

When drafting the response to the Knowledge Gain criterion, applicants should:

- describe their **research vision for the next five years**.
- outline the **proposed new research** to be undertaken with the Investigator Grant, including objectives, basic methodologies and expected outcomes.
- describe the importance of the research: the problem, need, and solution
- describe the context of the program within: their funded work, the broader research environment, the national/international context.
- describe the support for their proposed research (e.g., access to technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes).
- outline their ability to deliver and build capacity.

Template (with tips and suggested sub-headings) is Available on our website

Knowledge Gain – the first page

1. **A vision statement**

2. Use the first three paragraphs to outline:

- The problem – its significance and why we should care
- How you are conceiving the problem differently so that your program will deliver outcomes
- How you are the best person to deliver the program

3. State the aims and objectives of your five-year research program (proposed new research)

4. Segue to **Background** to introduce your program of work (which may or may not start on your first page)

Knowledge Gain – General tips

- Write to the generalist panel – they will be experts in their fields, not necessarily yours!
- Ensure that innovation, novelty, significance, capacity building, outcomes and impact are clearly described.
- Make it clear that the program will deliver step-change for you as a leader, for the field, for the end-user.
- Write in the first person.
- Seek peer review.

Which of these would you prefer to read?

Use subheadings to anchor the reader

Utilise white space

GRANT PROPOSAL – INVESTIGATOR GRANT FUNDING COMMENCING
Application ID: [insert
CIA Surname: [insert

A. Research Proposal (Response to *Knowledge Gain criterion*) *(5 pages)*

LOREM IPSUM DOLOR SIT AMET

Consectetuer adipiscing elit. Maecenas porttitor congue massa. Fusce posuere, magna sed pulvinar ultricies, purus lectus malesuada libero, sit amet commodo magna eros quis urna. Nunc viverra imperdiet enim. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus.

Pellentesque habitant **morbi tristique** senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci.

- Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor.
- Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy.

NUNC VIVERRA IMPERDIET ENIM

Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. **Aenean nec lorem**. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy.

Walls of text are off-putting

GRANT PROPOSAL – INVESTIGATOR GRANT FUNDING COMMENCING 2022
Application ID: [insert text here]
CIA Surname: [insert text here]

A. Research Proposal (Response to *Knowledge Gain criterion*) *(5 pages)*

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Maecenas porttitor congue massa. Fusce posuere, magna sed pulvinar ultricies, purus lectus malesuada libero, sit amet commodo magna eros quis urna. Nunc viverra imperdiet enim. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus.Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy. Consectetuer adipiscing elit. Maecenas porttitor congue massa. Fusce posuere, magna sed pulvinar ultricies, purus lectus malesuada libero, sit amet commodo magna eros quis urna. Nunc viverra imperdiet enim. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy. Fusce est. Vivamus a tellus. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Proin pharetra nonummy pede. Mauris et orci. Aenean nec lorem. In porttitor. Donec laoreet nonummy augue. Suspendisse dui purus, scelerisque at, vulputate vitae, pretium mattis, nunc. Mauris eget neque at sem venenatis eleifend. Ut nonummy.

General Information

Further Resources Available

RO Investigator Grants Webpage (for dates, templates, resources)

- https://research.uq.edu.au/research-support/research-management/funding-schemes/national-health-medical-research-council-nhmrc/nhmrc-investigator-grants
  - Frequently Ask Questions (FAQ)
  - Grant Proposal (knowledge gain) template
  - Career Disruption Calculator
  - Key Findings from previous rounds (including benchmarking information)
  - Research Impact Guide

RO Team

- NHMRC@research.uq.edu.au

Online resources @ Metrics, Engagement & Impact

https://web.library.uq.edu.au/research-and-publish/metrics
https://web.library.uq.edu.au/research-and-publish/engagement-and-impact

UQ Liaison Librarians

- https://web.library.uq.edu.au/library-services/liaison-librarians

RO Library of Successful Grants

- https://research-support.uq.edu.au/resources-and-support/research-office/uq-library-successful-grants

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