Gold Coast Health

Clinician Researcher FELLOWSHIPS

2027
Application Guideline

Clinician Researcher Fellowships 2027 Application Guideline

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An electronic version of this document is available at https://healthqld.smartygrants.com.au/

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Version history

Version	Date	Changed by	Description
V 1.0	23/06/2026		Launch Webinar
V 1.1	29/06/2026	Research Office – Research Development Manager (Grants & Education)	Amended eligibility sentence in introduction consistency with section *4. Eligibility*. Added version number into footer Added version history table
V 1.2	03/07/2026	Research Office – Research Development Manager (Grants & Education)	Amended close date to 23/11/2026
V 1.3	16/07/2026	Research Office - Snr. Research Coordinator	Removed link to Strategic Plan (G28) and replaced with link to Strategic Plan 2026-2030.
V 1.4	18/07/2026	Research Office – Research Development Manager (Grants & Education)	Amended and added email addresses for support / Digital Health and Innovation
V 2.0	22/07/2026	Research Office – Research Development Manager (Grants & Education)	Edited *section 6.1. Application* - Form Sections. Provided questions included in application form (Researcher Potential; Research Significance; Research Feasibility; Research Environment)

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1. Introduction and Highlights

1.1. About the Program

Clinician researchers are well placed to identify research opportunities of great relevance to the health care of our patients and its delivery. The Clinician Researcher Fellowships (the Fellowships) are available to Gold Coast Health clinical staff, providing an opportunity to develop their clinical research careers while remaining clinically active, by contributing to high-quality research, supporting its translation and contributing to improved healthcare delivery.

Through the opportunity to develop research career pathways, the program aims to attract and retain skilled and promising early career researchers. Staff with a Research Higher Degree (RHD) (PhD, MPhil, or MD by thesis) within 10 years of the fellowship application closing date.

The Fellowship will provide Fellows with up to 0.4 FTE research time of three year's duration to further their research career, support a research active culture, develop and undertake a body of research in areas of existing strength, working towards national and international recognition.

There are up to two Fellowships available in 2027 (if suitable based on merit). The Fellowship program will be open to clinical staff across all disciplines, with a maximum of one for Senior Medical Officers.

Applicants must be an early career clinician researcher and hold a clinical position of at least 0.4 FTE at Gold Coast Health.

Key Dates

Key Dates	Details
21 September 2026	Applications Open
23 November 2026	Applications Close
Week commencing 15 February 2027	Interviews – recommend applicants for funding. Shortlisted applicants must be available to attend the face-to-face panel interview session
Week commencing 22 February 2027	Successful applicants notified
4 March 2027 - TBC	Announcement of successful applications at the Research, Innovation and Transformation Showcase

2. Program Objectives

Gold Coast Health is committed to setting a forward-looking research agenda which embraces novel approaches to diagnostics and therapeutics, as well as systematically evaluating our clinical practice and the implementation of new knowledge to deliver world class healthcare.

The Gold Coast Health Research Roadmap 2025-2028 outlines a vision that our research transforms health, with our purpose to advance high-quality research to address our health priorities, leading to improved patient care. The Clinician Researcher Fellowships program will enable our clinicians to concurrently advance their research and clinical practice careers, and develop a program of research aligned to this vision and purpose and the priorities of the broader Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

The key objectives of the Clinician Researcher Fellowships program are to:

- Support and develop research excellence in early career clinician researchers who are embedded within Gold Coast Health.
- Promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways by attracting and retaining our early career clinician researchers.
- Expand early career clinician researcher capacity in a supportive and appropriately supervised, research-enabling environment.
- Enable capacity building, early career clinician researcher mentoring, and the continued development of leadership and supervision capabilities that align with Gold Coast Health's Values and the broader Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026-2030.
- Applications are invited from clinicians across all healthcare disciplines, including allied health services, nursing, health sciences, dental, medical.

3. Grant Funding and Support

3.1. Funding

There are up to two Fellowships available in 2027 (if suitable based on merit). The Fellowship program will be open to clinical* staff across all disciplines, with a maximum of one for Senior Medical Officers.

The Fellowship will provide up to 0.4 FTE of three years' duration. Applicants must hold a clinical position (undertaking clinical duties*) of at least 0.4FTE at Gold Coast Health for the duration of their Fellowship.

Research Grant Scheme	Value	Funding Period	Maximum Offered
Clinician Researcher Fellowship	0.4 FTE clinical staff (all disciplines, including allied health services, nursing, health sciences, dental, medical.)	Up to 3 Years	2

*Please note:

- The total concurrent employment arrangement with Gold Coast Health does not have to equate to 1.0 FTE, but cannot exceed 1.0 FTE.
- Clinical staff/ Clinician is defined as a health professional with a recognised tertiary degree, with eligibility or membership with a relevant professional body.
- Clinical duties refers to those duties undertaken by the applicant in the course of their employment as a clinician. These duties may be directly related to patient care or may include non-clinical duties such as administrative or management specialisation.

3.2. Support from Gold Coast Health Research Office

Preparation of Application

We would encourage all applicants to make use of the following additional supports and resources before commencing their application. Contact the Grants Administrator at GrantsGoldCoast@health.qld.gov.au for any specific advice.

The **Research Development Hub** is accessible to all Gold Coast Health staff and contains a variety of resources and support for researchers including webinars, information on involving consumers in research, the Advancing Researcher Alliance and Research Office drop-in clinics.

Applicants can attend a Research Office drop-in clinic, which are held in the Gold Coast University Hospital Library, Level 1, E Block, Pathology and Education Building on a Tuesday morning at 7am (Book an appointment here: Gold Coast Health Research Office - Book an Appointment) or a Thursday afternoon 2:00pm – 4:00pm (walk in only session) for assistance with protocols, budget preparation, statistics, ethics and governance.

Applicants are encouraged to access **research career development resources** to identify their strengths in research, translation, and leadership and plan development within their clinical department, across Gold Coast Health and the wider research and clinical community. One research career development framework relevant to a health service research environment is the Queensland Health Allied Health Research Careers Development Framework. The Framework and accompanying Individual Assessment Tool helps clinicians assess capabilities across core domains and support career discussions with managers, research mentors and early career researchers.

If an applicant's program of research includes **digital ideas or technology components** (e.g. AI, software, data, or system integration), please engage with the Digital Health and Innovation (DHI) Division to ensure alignment with technical, cybersecurity, and infrastructure requirements. DHI can help identify risks, clarify integration requirements, and highlight opportunities to leverage existing systems, strengthening implementation planning.

Please complete the Digital Ideas form to submit for consideration.

Please contact DHI's Investment Portfolio Management Office for any specific advice at GCDigitalIMO@health.qld.gov.au or via GCDHIPMO@health.qld.gov.au

Successful Applicants

The Gold Coast Health Research Office will offer support to Fellows for the duration of the grant program. This support will include structured training experiences (online and in person) delivered in partnership with academic partners or one-to-one consultations designed to strengthen research impact for Fellows across all stages of the research lifecycle, including project design, statistical analysis, ethics and governance processes, funding development, and dissemination.

4. Eligibility

To be eligible for a Clinician Researcher Fellowship, applicants must:

- Be employed in a clinical role with Gold Coast Health for the duration of the Fellowship, appointed to a minimum of 0.4 FTE clinician duties, as per the definition above.
- The total Gold Coast Health appointment must not exceed 1.0 FTE. Note: the total concurrent employment arrangement with Gold Coast Health does not have to equate to 1.0 FTE.
- The Fellowship program will be open to clinical staff across all disciplines and will provide up to 0.4 FTE of three years' duration.
- To be eligible, evidence of completion of a Research Higher Degree (aka RHD and including PhD, MPhil, or MD by thesis) within 10 years of the fellowship application closing date (evidence must be provided). If a RHD thesis is imminent or under examination, applications may be considered if the RHD is conferred by 1 March 2027.
    - detail any periods of career disruption, that will be considered for applicant eligibility (https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/nhmrc-relative-opportunity-policy).
- Shortlisted applicants must be available to attend the face-to-face panel interview session on the week commencing 15 February 2027.

5. Conditions of Funding

5.1. Funding Use

What can be funded:

- Fellowships will provide funding support (i.e. salary costs) for up to 0.4 FTE annually (but not less than 0.2 FTE) for three years.
- Fellows will either be concurrently appointed to a temporary part-time position at the level of their current substantive clinician appointment within Gold Coast Health or funds will be transferred to their existing position to enable up to 0.4 FTE of time to be allocated to the Fellowship.
- Fellowship research time can be used to develop an individualised research training plan on commencement of their Fellowship. It is expected that this plan demonstrates how the Fellow intends on participating in relevant research training (e.g. training provided through academic partners, and building on a baseline of training already completed).
- Complete Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training. Submission of a certificate of completion will be required prior to disbursement of funding.
- Undertake a body of research aligned with the Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030 and Local Area Needs Assessment and undertaken at, or significantly associated with, Gold Coast Health facilities and/or research which involves preventative or community work that will directly impact Gold Coast Health service delivery and the wider community.
- Build broader research capacity and seek external research funding opportunities related to their Fellowship project.
- Demonstrate adherence to the research plan outlined in the approved application, and continuation of Fellowship funding is contingent upon successful progress toward completion of these activities.

- Participate in a regular six-monthly Executive Sponsor check-in with the Gold Coast Health Chair of Research to discuss progress (including but not limited to research leadership, mentoring, collaboration opportunities, progress with external grant opportunities)
- Prepare an Annual Progress Report.
- Be active in applying for external research funding related to their Fellowship project during their Fellowship (and provide evidence).

6. Application Process

6.1. Application

The application must be submitted by the advertised closing date using the required SmartyGrants online application form (extensions will not be granted).

Applications missing required information, evidence, documentation, signatures or exceeding the word limits, will not be considered.

Form Sections

The following will need to be provided as part of the application.

Please upload all requisite documents according to content and formatting requirements as noted.

Application Section	Further information
Applicant Details	Applicants must: • Provide information on clinical role within Gold Coast Health, clinical registration/ certification • Provide evidence of a Research Higher Degree (RHD) (PhD, MPhil, or MD by thesis) within 10 years of the fellowship application closing date. • Applications may be considered if a RHD thesis is imminent or under examination, provided the RHD is conferred by the 1st March 2027. • Detail any periods of career disruption. Career disruptions will be considered in line with the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy (https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/nhmrc-relative-opportunity-policy).
Researcher Potential	In this section applicants must address the following: • Describe your recent research achievements and their impact on your clinician researcher career trajectory? • Describe how you have generated and applied evidence into clinical practice? • What are your research career goals and how will this Fellowship help you achieve this?
CV	• A CV (no more than 6 pages, 1 PDF file only) is to be provided. An *optional* CV template is available online.

Application Section	Further information
Research Significance	Applicants must provide a proposal to develop and undertake a body of research aligned with the Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030 and Local Area Needs Assessment and undertaken at, or significantly associated with, Gold Coast Health facilities and/or research which involves preventative or community work that will directly impact Gold Coast Health service delivery and the wider community, in line with Gold Coast Health's Values. In this section applicants must address the following: • Nominate the Broad Research Area and Group as they relate to this research proposal. • Describe how your proposed research program aligns with the Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026-2030. • Describe the potential impact that the proposed research program will have for Gold Coast Health's service delivery and wider community. ◦ applicants may wish to refer to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)'s Research impact position statement and the AAMRI Research Impact Framework for guidance. • Background and Rationale - Describe a specific issue or problem you want to address and how your research program will contribute to the current evidence base. • Aims and Objectives - Describe the aims and objectives of your research program. • Research Plan - Include a plan of the proposed research activity (e.g., design, methods, participants, sample size, procedures/data analyses plan etc). • Describe how you would use the Fellowship and research program to deliver benefits beyond the proposed study? Describe the benefits for the wider organisation, through capacity building, mentorship and longer-term funding opportunities.
Research Feasibility	In this section applicants must address the following: • Describe how you will balance clinical duties alongside the requirements of the Fellowship. • Describe the opportunities and plans for new collaborations both internally and externally to support the program. • Describe how you plan to incorporate consumer engagement within your research program throughout the Fellowship? Please specify whether resources are from within Gold Coast Health or external. • Provide details of your timeline, milestones and activities (upload Timeline Gantt Chart) • Provide reference list for research proposal (upload).

Application Section	Further information
Research Environment	In this section applicants must address the following: *Capacity Building* • Describe how you will use this Fellowship to advance your own research and clinical professional development? Provide examples of what specific skills and/or knowledge you hope to develop and how this will be achieved. • Describe how you intend to use this Fellowship to actively build research capacity and collaborations within your clinical department across Gold Coast Health and the wider research and clinical community? *Health service support* • Describe the supervision, infrastructure and resources that will be available to you during this Fellowship. Please include any contingency management strategies for any deviations from your original plan. *Research Supervisors* • Secure commitment from two or more supervisors (a PhD accredited or established researcher nominated to supervise the Fellow whilst undertaking their Fellowship duties) /mentors (an adequately experienced individual who will provide advice, guidance, and support to the Fellow for their long-term research development), at least one being an academic (university) supervisor/mentor. • Include details of how these individuals will provide support in event of a successful application (including but not limited to individualised research mentorship and a training /development plan, external research funding opportunities, grant writing expertise). • Applicants may wish to use a **research career development framework** with accompanying assessment tools to assess capabilities. One framework relevant to a health service research environment is the Queensland Health Allied Health Research Careers Development Framework.
Letter of Support	A signed Letter of Support from the relevant Head of Department endorsing the application, including a commitment to support a reduction of clinical duties within six months of acceptance of the Fellowship Agreement Terms and Conditions and Clinician Researcher Fellowship arrangement.
Certification page	Ensure that all requisite certifications and signatures are obtained on the certification page of the application form.

6.2. Submitting an application

Once the grant round is open applications must be completed via the **SmartyGrants** online platform. Applicants should follow the prompts to login and create an account (if no account exists). When the account is created, applicants can refer to the Help Hub for the **Help Guide for Applicants**, and the Applicant FAQ.

Once the application has commenced, save progress regularly to avoid losing work due to possible timeouts. Applicants can return to the form at any time to make edits, however, once 'submitted' further

edits cannot be made. Before submitting the online application form ensure all requisite certifications and signatures have been obtained:

- download a PDF copy of the application form and Gantt chart (identifying timeline and milestones).
- provide a copy of PDF application and the certification template to relevant delegates/ parties for signing, including the following representatives (Applicant, Head of Department, Primary Supervisor, Executive Director)
- Please allow sufficient time for all delegates to review, certify and return the application.
- Once all signatures are obtained on the certification template, upload PDF of the application.
- Once uploaded, 'submit' the application.Applications can still be **viewed once submitted**.

7. Assessment Process

7.1. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed by the Clinician Researcher Fellowships Panel (the Panel) using the following criteria (Please refer to Appendix 1 – 2027 Assessment Framework for further detail):

Criteria	Description	Weighting (%)
Researcher potential • Researcher track record and career trajectory • Ability to generate and apply research evidence in practice	The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated an aptitude for research through their track record (e.g. competitive grants and peer-reviewed publications) and/or a commitment to the application of research in their clinical field (relative to opportunity). Potential to further develop their research career and level of ongoing support for research time beyond the Fellowship program as outlined in a letter of support and description of how the Fellowship will springboard their career.	30
Research program significance and impact	The quality of the program proposal, alignment with the Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030 and potential to impact Gold Coast Health's service delivery and wider community.	30
Research program feasibility	Including how they will balance clinical duties with the research program, opportunities for new collaborations internally and externally to support the work.	20
Research environment • Research capacity building • Health service support	Including the team, supervision, potential to build broader research capacity across Gold Coast Health, health service support and consumer engagement.	20

7.2. Review Process

Members of the Fellowship Review Panel will review each application (after considering potential conflicts of interest).

The Fellowship Review Panel will be Chaired by the Gold Coast Health Chair of Research and will include clinical researchers, members of academic partner organisations and a consumer representative.

Each application will be scored (1-7) under each of the four criteria above and then scores converted to a criterion score (between 20-30% for each) and totaled to 100. Reviewers will be requested to score each of the four criteria below.

Grade	Category	Description
7	Outstanding	Fully addresses all assessment criteria to an outstanding and exceptional by nationally competitive standard and presents an outstanding argument for selection.
6	Excellent	Addresses all outlined assessment criteria to an excellent standard and makes a compelling argument for selection.
5	Very good	Addresses most outlined assessment criteria to a very good (above average to high) standard and makes a strong case for consideration.
4	Good	Meets the outlined assessment criteria to an acceptable standard and presents a sound proposal for consideration.
3	Below average	Addresses only some of the outlined assessment criteria and the case for consideration is weak or poorly formulated.
2	Marginal	Does not sufficiently address the outlined assessment criteria and presents no case for consideration.
1	Unsatisfactory	Does not address any of the selection criteria and is not satisfactory for consideration.

Please refer to Appendix 1 – 2027 Assessment Framework for further detail

Following assessment by the Panel, short-listed applicants will be recommended and invited for interview.

Those applicants who are unsuccessful and do not progress to an interview will receive written confirmation via email from the Chair of Research not less than one week prior to the scheduled interview date.

Interviews

Invitations will be received by phone and email not less than one week prior to the scheduled interview. Applicants are requested to invite their Head of Department, Clinical Supervisor or Executive delegate to attend.

Date	Week commencing 15 February 2027 (Date to TBC by 31 December 2026)
Duration	Up to 45 minutes (must arrive 15 minutes prior to prepare)
Location	TBC by 31 December 2026

Please note:

- Timeslots will be allocated, and applicants are expected to be available at the requested time.
- Acceptance must be confirmed by return email. A request for a change in time only may be made. Requests are not guaranteed and will only be made subject to panel availability.
- Should an applicant decline or be unavailable to interview, they will not be eligible for the current round and the next-highest ranked applicant may be invited to interview.
- Interviews will be held at Gold Coast University Hospital, and in-person attendance is required.
- The interview will be attended by the Chair of Research (Panel Chair), members of the review panel, the applicant and their Head of Department or delegate (if unavailable).
- The Head of Department or Executive delegate attending the interview will be asked to speak to the level of potential impact, project feasibility and support of the applicant.

7.3. Decisions

Outcomes and Award

The Fellowship panel will convene to determine a recommendation following completion of the interviews. The Fellowship panel will then prepare a recommendation for noting to the Gold Coast Health Study, Education, Research Trust Account (SERTA) Committee with a final decision by the Chief Medical Officer, Medical Services, Clinical Governance and Research (MSCGR) and the Chief Financial Officer. The Executive Research Committee will be provided with the outcome of the recommendations for information.

Successful candidates will receive an offer and will be requested to undertake formal negotiations with their proposed academic partner and confirm arrangements with their Head of Department and Executive Director. Upon award, Fellows will receive the following:

- Letter of Confirmation.
- Fellowship Agreement to be signed by the Fellow, outlining the Terms and Conditions of the award, including compliance with all relevant policies, procedures, legislation and regulatory frameworks relating to the conduct and management of research.
- Confirmation of Fellowship Arrangement form to be signed by the Fellow and their Director.

Outcomes are anticipated to be announced at the Research, Innovation and Transformation Showcase on 4 March 2027 (TBC).

8. Contractual Arrangements

8.1. General/ Funding Agreement

Fellows must adhere to the following conditions outlined in the Funding Agreement, including:

- Fellows must take up the appointment within six months of acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the Fellowship Agreement and Fellowship Arrangement, except where granted special permission to do otherwise.
- Fellows and their Directors should give early consideration to any back-fill requirements to ensure these are in place prior to commencement of the agreed Fellowship term.

- It is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure full ethical approval (Human Research Ethics Committee approval) and governance authorisation (Site Specific Authorisation) is received for all research undertaken during the Fellowship.
- The Fellow will be responsible for demonstrating adherence to the research plan outlined in the approved application, and continuation of Fellowship funding is contingent upon successful progress toward completion of these activities. Fellows will be monitored via the check-in and their Annual Progress Report.
- Where the application includes a proposed collaboration with an academic partner, the applicant must also demonstrate agreement from the academic partner to meet the minimum expectations in Fellowship support, including both in-kind and infrastructure support.

8.2. Dissemination and Publicity

It is a condition of the Fellowship agreement that the Fellow will cooperate in any reasonable public relations requests or forums as a research ambassador to promote research including the annual Research, Innovation and Transformation Showcase, Research Grand Rounds, internal and external communications. The Fellow will also act as an advocate for clinician researchers at Gold Coast Health and become a member of the Gold Coast Health Advancing Research Alliance.

Appropriate recognition of the Fellowship

Recipients must acknowledge the support of the Fellowship in reports, publications and presentations associated with the funded research as follows:

This work was supported by the Gold Coast Health Clinician Researcher Fellowships program

It is the responsibility of the Fellow to ensure that copies or links to all published articles, preprints and conference abstracts are provided to the Research Office via the Grants Administrator as soon as they become available.

Participation in promotion, monitoring, and evaluation of the scheme

- Fellows may be contacted to provide information or attend events to:
  - present outcomes and updates of progress of the funded research at events, including research-related symposiums at Gold Coast Health or partner organisations, or
  - raise the profile of the research work or CRGS through internal or external Communications opportunities.
- The Fellow is expected to proactively communicate and disseminate project outcomes, including working with the Research Office and Strategic Communications.

8.3. Confidentiality and Privacy / Intellectual Property Rights

Recipients must adhere to the Gold Coast Health Intellectual Property Policy (Document ID POL1283) and comply with any amendments and adhere to the clauses detailed in the Funding Agreement. Please refer to the Policy for the definition of "Intellectual property". Ownership and the associated rights of all Intellectual Property generated because of funded research will initially be vested in Gold Coast Health, unless otherwise agreed.

Where funded research involves a collaboration between Gold Coast Health and one or more academic partners, conjoint employees or students, the Intellectual Property generated may be vested as agreed between the participating institutions. This will be negotiated through preparation of Funding Agreements.

8.1. Administration of Funds

- Fellowship recipients will be provided clinical backfill for the dedicated research time allocated to the Clinician Researcher Fellowship program for the duration of Fellowship term being **three years**
- The Fellowship recipient may only use funding provided under this program to fund salary costs up to 0.4 FTE in line with the program of research as described in the application. Funding to conduct the research as described in the research plan must be sourced separately.
- A Funding Agreement will be provided to the applicant for execution, and a Confirmation of Fellowship Arrangement must also be signed by the Clinical Director / Head of Department.
- A dedicated Fellowship ION will be created under a cost centre within the operational area of the Fellowship recipient. The Fellowship recipient is encouraged to work closely with their line manger to ensure correct management of Fellowship funds to salary.
- Fellowship recipients will be provided with funding upon execution of the Funding Agreement or upon commencement of an agreed Fellowship commencement date (within six months of award).
- The Fellowships are awarded for a maximum of **three years**, with extensions only allowable via an approved variation request made to the Grants Administrator grantsgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au

9. Further Information

Gold Coast Health Research Office

Email: GrantsGoldCoast@health.qld.gov.au.

Phone: (07) 5687 0663

Research Development Hub:

https://healthqld.sharepoint.com/teams/GCHHS-RDHUB

Access Clinician Researcher Fellowship Application: https://healthqld.smartygrants.com.au/

Appendix 1

Gold Coast Health Clinician Researcher Fellowships Assessment Framework 2027

Reviewers will be asked to provide a grade for each assessment criteria, using the below assessment framework. Where reviewers have graded 3 or below, additional feedback can be provided but the application will not be competitive. Applicants' track record should be considered 'relative to opportunity' using NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy | NHMRC and taking into account: clinical workload, career disruptions, access to resources and broader personal or professional circumstances.

Criterion	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3 or below *
1: Researcher potential (30% weighting)					
Researcher track record and career trajectory	Exceptional track record relative to opportunity, demonstrating sustained growth and clear trajectory toward research leadership. High-impact publications with strong first/last/senior authorship, strong citation influence and invited presentations. Extensive internal and external collaborations, including leadership roles, within the health service. Substantial success in competitive funding and clear evidence of independence.	Excellent track record relative to opportunity with consistent high-quality outputs and strong authorship roles. Strong citation profile and regular presentations. Well-developed internal and external collaborations, including contributions within the health service. Good success in competitive funding and evidence of emerging independence.	Very good track record relative to opportunity with solid publication output and some leading authorship roles. Evidence of presentations and developing citation impact. Established internal collaborations and some external links. Some success in grant funding and progression toward independence.	Moderate track record with some publications and limited leading authorship. Basic presentation history and emerging citation impact. Limited internal collaborations and minimal external engagement. Limited success in funding and unclear trajectory toward independence.	Limited or minimal track record with low publication output and impact. Little or no presentation history. No meaningful internal or external collaborations. No success in funding and no clear career trajectory.
Ability to generate and apply research evidence in practice	Outstanding record of research translation with clear, evidenced pathway to impact influencing clinical practice, policy or health outcomes. Strong partnerships with clinicians, services and policymakers, demonstrating measurable real-world benefit.	Excellent evidence of translation and a well-articulated pathway to impact, including influence on practice, service delivery or policy. Strong engagement with relevant stakeholders.	Good evidence of translation potential with some demonstrated impact on practice or services. A reasonable pathway to impact is described.	Limited evidence of translation beyond academic outputs. Impact on practice is described but not well substantiated or clearly demonstrated.	Minimal or no evidence of translation or impact. No clear pathway to influence practice, policy, or patient outcomes.

Criterion	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3 or below *
2: Research program significance (30%)					
Significance and impact	Highly significant and innovative research program addressing a critical evidence gap. Strong theoretical justification and clear alignment with health system priorities. High likelihood of advancing knowledge and delivering meaningful patient and system benefits. Demonstrates a compelling and well-defined pathway for translation into practice, with high likelihood of delivering meaningful patient and system benefits	Significant and well-justified research program addressing an important gap. Clear alignment with health priorities and a credible pathway for translation into practice with strong potential to improve knowledge and outcomes.	Well-justified program addressing a relevant gap with moderate innovation. Alignment with health priorities is evident but not strongly articulated. Potential for translation into practice is described, though not fully developed.	Limited justification of significance or innovation. Alignment to health priorities is unclear or weakly described. Translation into practice is weakly described or poorly substantiated.	Poorly justified program with unclear significance or lack of innovation. No clear alignment to health priorities or unmet needs. No meaningful consideration of translation into practice or impact. No clear mechanism to deliver benefit or impact.
3: Research program feasibility (20%)					
Feasibility	Rigorous, well-designed research program with clear alignment to aims. Detailed milestones, deliverables, and timelines are realistic and achievable. Risks are clearly identified with strong mitigation strategies. Strong evidence of meaningful consumer and stakeholder engagement integrated across the research lifecycle.	Strong study design with appropriate methodology and clearly defined milestones. Timelines are feasible and key risks are identified with reasonable mitigation strategies. Good evidence of consumer and stakeholder engagement.	Adequate design and methodology with broadly appropriate milestones and timelines. Some risks are identified, though mitigation strategies are limited. Some evidence of consumer or stakeholder engagement.	Partially developed design with gaps in methodology or unrealistic timelines. Risks are not adequately addressed. Minimal or largely tokenistic consumer or stakeholder engagement.	Poorly designed and unfeasible program with unclear methodology and unrealistic timelines. No meaningful risk mitigation planning. No evidence of consumer or stakeholder engagement.

Criterion	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3 or below *
4: Research environment (20%)					
Research capacity building	Outstanding and well-articulated plan for professional development with a clear trajectory to independence and research leadership. Strong and sustained contribution to building research capacity within the department and across the health service.	Strong and feasible development plan demonstrating progression toward independence. Clear contribution to research capacity building within the organisation.	Adequate development plan with some contribution to research capacity within the department or health service.	Limited or unclear development plan with minimal contribution to research capacity building.	Poorly described or absent development plan with no meaningful contribution to research capacity.
Health service support	Outstanding research environment with strong infrastructure, resources and institutional support. Highly experienced mentorship team with clearly defined roles, governance, and oversight. Robust contingency planning for funding and program risks is evident.	Strong research environment with appropriate infrastructure and experienced mentorship. Roles, support structures, and oversight are clearly described with reasonable contingency planning.	Adequate environment with sufficient infrastructure and mentorship to support program delivery. Basic support structures and roles are described.	Limited description of infrastructure, mentorship, or support environment. Roles and support structures are unclear or underdeveloped.	Weak or absent research environment with inadequate infrastructure, mentorship, and support. No clear roles, oversight, or contingency planning.

**Reviewers will be asked to provide a grade. Where reviewers have graded 3 or below, additional feedback can be provided but the application will not be competitive.*