



Research Grant Guidelines 2023

The RMH Research Funding Program

Date guidelines released: 27 November 2023



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital

Contents

RMH Research Grant schemes	3
Introduction	3
Background	3
About the Research Grant schemes	3
Research Grant Program: schemes available in 2023 round	4
Grant Value	4
RMH Victor Hurley Medical Research Grant	4
RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant	4
Funding Rules and Guidelines	5
1. Enquiries and correspondence	5
2. Application process	5
3. Opening date	5
4. Closing date and time	5
5. Outcome of applications	5
6. Eligibility	5
7. Consumer and community participation	6
8. Acceptance of Award	6
9. Conditions of award	6
10. Intellectual Property	6
11. Use of Funds	6
12. Relative to opportunity	7
13. Career disruption	7
14. Duration of Award	7
15. Approvals to be obtained prior to funding commencing	7
16. Varying a Grant	7
17. Reporting	7
18. Parental Leave	7
19. Review Process	7
20. Conflict of Interest	8
21. The Assessment Criteria	8
How to apply	9
Advice and instructions to applicants	9
General information	9
Starting a New Application	9
Section 1: Project Title and Investigator Details	9
Section 2: Project Details	10
Section 3: Internal Support and Timeline	10
Section 4: Budget	11
Section 5: Clearances	11
Section 6: Certification	11
Frequently Asked Questions	12
APPENDIX A: Scoring Matrix	13
APPENDIX B: Instructions for completing the Grant Proposal Template	14

Research Grant schemes

Introduction

This document serves to outline the overarching funding rules of the following Research Grant in Aid schemes offered within the **Royal Melbourne Hospital Research Funding Program (RFP)** administered by the Office for Research (OFR) for the 2023 round for funding commencing 2024:

- » The RMH Victor Hurley Medical Research Grant
- » The RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant

Applicants are encouraged to read these guidelines carefully before completing an application.

Background

The RMH is one of Australia's leading health care providers and a key player in hospital-based research. Our commitment to research has been demonstrated by providing RMH staff with access to research funding support through an internal contestable research funding scheme.

The RFP is financially supported by general and targeted donation, trusts and bequests.

About the Research Grant schemes

At The RMH we're inspired by our vision of *Advancing health for everyone, every day*.

Clinical research is part of patient care and provides an opportunity for our patients to access new interventions such as investigational drugs, vaccines, medical devices, health service changes, preventative care strategies and more.

The objectives of the Research Grant in Aid schemes is to:

- » support investigators to establish their research programs;
- » foster health and medical research for the benefit of our community;
- » invest in the highest quality researchers and projects.

Applicants should note that the terms "grant in aid" and "grant" is used interchangeably in this document and its meaning should be interpreted as the same item.

Research Grant Program: schemes available in 2023 round

Grant Value

Each grant scheme in the Research Grant Program is valued at up to \$25,000. Researchers will be asked to justify their budgets in the application form.

RMH Victor Hurley Medical Research Grant

Grants awarded are intended to support medical clinician researchers, working at campuses of the RMH and who are in the early stages of their research careers.

Two (2) Victor Hurley Medical Research Grants will be offered in 2023 grant round.

RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant

This award will provide \$25,000 over a 12-month period to support a RMH medical clinician-researcher to embark or complete their PhD.

One (1) RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant will be offered in the 2023 grant round.

Funding Rules and Guidelines

1. Enquiries and correspondence

All grants are administered by the Office for Research (OFR). Any enquiries regarding the administration of grants, or about the content of guidelines should be addressed to:

Name: Angela Magira
Manager, Office for Research
Email: RMHRAO@mh.org.au
Phone: +61 3 9342 7950

2. Application process

All applications must be submitted electronically using SmartyGrants, an online grant management system. Applicants who are not yet registered must do so before they commence their application.

Applications must be certified and submitted by the closing date of the funding scheme. Late submissions will not be considered.

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of application.

Help on how to complete the online application form can be found on the SmartyGrants website at: <https://applicanthehelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

3. Opening date

Applications open 12:00 PM Monday, 27 November 2023.

4. Closing date and time

Applications close 11.59PM AEST, Friday 19 January 2024.

5. Outcome of applications

The Office for Research aims to advise applicants of the outcome by March 2024.

6. Eligibility

Applications to the RFP are subject to meeting all the following eligibility requirements.

Unless otherwise specified in the specific schemes, applicants must be RMH employees with a current appointment.

Staff who only hold honorary appointments with RMH are not eligible to apply except if otherwise specified in the scheme specific eligibility criteria.

- Applicants will not be considered if they have achieved the academic level of professor.
- The applicant must be the lead author of the research proposal.
- The project must be a RMH-led project *and* RMH researcher must be the major contributor to the protocol.

If an applicant is awarded a grant and the proposal is found to be contrary to this eligibility criterion, the OFR will terminate the award and all funding must be repaid.

- Applicants must be Australian Citizens or Permanent Residents or hold an appropriate working Visa that allows the applicant time and opportunity to complete the study.
- The majority of the research funded by the RFP must be completed within the RMH. Collaborators may work at other institutions.
- A research project can only be submitted to either the Grants *or* the Fellowship schemes – but not to both.
- Applicants cannot hold concurrent RFP Grants (as distinct from RFP Fellowships) as the lead investigator, i.e. CIA. Current grant recipients may apply so long as the existing grant is expended by the time outcomes of applications are announced. Refer to [5. Outcome of Applications](#).

Multiple applications to grant schemes

- » Applicants may submit only one application per round as the lead applicant (CIA).
- » Applicants can nominate to be considered for any of the different fellowship schemes in that one application - so long as they meet the each of the scheme specific eligibility criteria.
- » An application to any or all the fellowship schemes will be counted as one application.

Previous recipients of RFP awards

Previous recipients of RFP grants and fellowships who have not submitted progress reports and/or final reports or who have not submitted adequately detailed progress and final reports may be deemed ineligible. If you are unsure, contact the OFR to check your eligibility.

In addition to the criteria described above further eligibility requirements and conditions apply to the respective schemes as described below:

RMH Victor Hurley Medical Research Grant

Eligibility criteria:

- » Early stages of their research career; and
- » Employee with a medical appointment at RMH. Honorary medical staff are not eligible.

RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant

Eligibility criteria:

- » Medical clinician-researcher; and
- » Undertaking or planning to undertake their PhD in 2024; and
- » Their PhD must be a project conducted primarily at RMH.

So long as all other criteria are met, applicants who have or will have honorary medical appointments are eligible to apply.

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements may be removed from the assessment process.

7. Consumer and community participation

Researchers are advised to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research. Applicants should refer to the NHMRC and Consumer Health Forum of Australia Ltd *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* which can be found on the NHMRC website at: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/consumer-and-community-engagement>.

8. Acceptance of Award

Successful applicants must accept an offer of award within one month upon receipt of the offer.

Receipt meaning date offer was emailed to the applicant.

To accept an offer of award, grant recipients need to sign the *RMH Grant Recipient Agreement*.

9. Conditions of award

All grants are offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the *RMH Grant Recipient Agreement*.

In signing an *RMH Grant Recipient Agreement*, the applicant is agreeing to abide by all the conditions including, but not limited to, the following policies of RMH:

- » Research (MH18); and
- » Financial Management Policy (MH08); and
- » People and Culture Policy (MH09).

10. Intellectual Property

The RMH will own the Intellectual Property (IP) generated as a result of the funded project and will apply the organisation's policy on IP (MH12).

Project IP excludes copyright in any student thesis

11. Use of Funds

Funding provided by the OFR for a grant activity must be spent on costs directly incurred for that project. An accurate budget must be provided in the application detailing the anticipated expenses to cover the cost of the project.

Salary support

Applicants can request salary support. The amount awarded must cover all staff costs referred to as Total Employment Costs (TEC).

Oncosts are direct costs associated with salary, including superannuation, sick leave, payroll tax etc. and must be included your budget. When calculating employment costs at RMH, ensure you include base salary plus 30% oncosts.

Also when budgeting, applicants must factor in annual salary increases each year for the duration of the grant.

Further information is provided in [Section 4. Budget](#) in *Advice & Instructions to Applicants*.

12. Relative to opportunity

All applications submitted to the RFP are assessed “relative to opportunity”. This reflects our position that assessments should accurately assess an applicant’s track record and associate productivity relative to stage of career.

Circumstances considered under relative to opportunity include, but are not limited to:

- » Amount of time spent as an active researcher
- » Career Disruptions. For further details see [13. Career disruption](#)
- » Clinical, administrative or teaching workload
- » Relocation of an applicant and their research laboratory or clinical practice
- » Research output and productivity commensurate with time spent employed in other sectors

13. Career disruption

A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an applicant’s capacity to work due to:

- » Parental Leave
- » Major illness/injury
- » Carer Responsibilities

Interruptions must involve either a continuous absence from work for periods of 28 calendar days or more and/or long-term partial return to work that has been formalised with the applicant’s manager.

The period of career disruption may be used:

- » to determine an applicant’s eligibility for a scheme;
- » to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for an assessment of an application
- » for consideration by the panel during their deliberations.

14. Duration of Award

The grants are 12-month awards and it is intended that funds are expended within this period.

15. Approvals to be obtained prior to funding commencing

Funding will not commence until all relevant approvals, particularly in relation to ethics and governance, have been received and lodged with

the OFR prior to the commencement of the research.

16. Varying a Grant

Variations occur when a grant needs modification from the original proposal submitted. This may include changes in personnel or an amendment to the budget.

Extensions to a project end date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, with a maximum extension of 12 months. Amendments due to Parental Leave requests may differ (see [18. Parental Leave](#)).

Requests to amend a grant or the terms of the conditions must be made in writing by email to the OFR requesting a Grant Variation Form.

17. Reporting

Annual progress and financial reports will be required. All information provided to the OFR in progress and final reports may be used for internal reporting and any RMH publications including the organisation’s Annual Report.

Where an applicant fails to submit satisfactory reports as required, the OFR may terminate funding and determine that all or part of the funding must be repaid. Alternatively, the OFR may withhold the remainder of the applicant’s funding under the scheme.

In addition, an applicant who fails to submit satisfactory reports may not be eligible to apply for any future funding rounds of the RFP.

18. Parental Leave

Recipients of grants who wish to apply for Parental Leave should contact their departmental managers. Once Parental Leave has been approved, inform the OFR in writing requesting a Grant Variation form.

The variation may include a request to extend the duration of the project for up to 12 months in the first instance.

19. Review Process

The OFR oversees the RFP and employs a grant review process with external representation. Applications are required to meet eligibility

requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria.

Applications will be ranked by the Grant Review Panel. The Grant Review Panel will comprise of:

- » An external clinician-researcher who will Chair the panel
- » A consumer representative
- » Up to four RMH clinician-researchers from various disciplines

Funding will be awarded to the highest ranking applications in each scheme.

The sequence of events in the peer review process is as follows:

1. Applications received
2. Reviewed for compliance
3. Applications are assessed and adjudicated by a Grant Review Panel with internal and external representation.
4. Applicants advised of outcome

20. Conflict of Interest

The OFR requires Peer Review participants to disclose interests, perceived or actual. Peer

Reviewers determined to have a high level of conflict of interest will not participate in the review of that application.

The OFR seeks to ensure that objectivity, impartiality and integrity are maintained throughout the assessment process.

21. The Assessment Criteria

Research is a pillar of the RMH strategy and the Research Funding Program is keen to support projects that are committed to enhancing patient care; are innovative and significant and demonstrate RMH's values of *People First, Lead with Kindness, and Excellence together*.

Applications will be assessed by Peer Reviewers who will assess applications to the extent to which they address the assessment criteria below and the [Scoring Matrix](#) in Appendix A.

- » Track Record relative to opportunity (30%)
- » Quality of the Research Proposal (30%)
- » Significance and innovation to health (15%)
- » Feasibility (15%)
- » Consumer and Community Involvement (10%)

How to apply

Advice and instructions to applicants

General information

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documents.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements.

Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be assessed as ineligible.

Starting a New Application

To start your application, visit the [RMH Research Grants](#) page on the RMH website, read the essential documentation, and then click the “Apply Now” button.

Each application will be assigned a unique application identification number. Use this ID number to identify your application in any correspondence when referring to your application.

There are 6 sections to be completed in the application:

- 1: Project Title and Investigator Details
- 2: Project Details
- 3: Internal Support and Timeline
- 4: Budget
- 5: Clearances
- 6: Certification

Section 1: Project Title and Investigator Details

Scientific Title

The scientific title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and should accurately describe the nature of the project.

Simplified Title

The simplified application title is usually used in media releases. It should be easily understood by the general public while still conveying the general nature of the project.

SCHEME SELECTION

Select the schemes to which you are seeking to apply. You may apply to all grants on the one form so long as you meet the eligibility criteria for each scheme.

Brief Synopsis (250 words)

The synopsis should accurately and briefly summarise the research as provided in the Research Proposal.

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR DETAILS (CIA)

Provide your name, contact details and profile data. An RMH Employee ID number is required to be eligible to many of the schemes. Refer to the relevant scheme’s eligibility criteria.

Provide details of **all your current appointments**, including your appointment at RMH.

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR TRACK RECORD

In this section you are asked to provide details of your qualifications, grants, awards and any other career achievements. Advise if you are claiming Relative to Opportunity and/or Career Disruption and provide details if applicable.

Funding Support

Provide details of any grants held within the last five years (2019 onwards).

Publications

Upload a PDF listing your publications which have been published in refereed journals. Sort the publications under the following headings:

- » Journal Articles
- » Chapters
- » Books

Only include articles which have been published or accepted for publication. The date of acceptance should be provided for papers not yet published.

Do not include:

- » papers submitted for publication but not yet accepted; or
- » abstracts

Achievements

Comment on your most significant achievements over the course of your research career. Outline activities that demonstrate your leadership qualities.

REFEREE REPORTS

This section applies only to applicants who would like to be considered for the RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant

Provide the names of two (2) referees and append their referee reports in support of your application. Ensure that one referee is your primary PhD Supervisor. The second referee must be able to comment on your clinical and/or research career.

Referees are asked to consider the following in their report:

- » Research potential / success
- » Leadership and mentoring
- » Benefit to health outcomes
- » Benefit to the Royal Melbourne Hospital

Both letters must be provided on official letterhead and uploaded to your application as a single PDF file.

Section 2: Project Details

Research Team

Provide name, current appointment, and affiliated institution of each member in their capacity as a member of the research team.

General Project Information

Grant Proposal Template

Applicants should refer to [Appendix B](#) in this document for instruction on how to complete the Grant Proposal Template.

All applicants are required to use the latest version of the Grant Proposal Template by downloading it directly from the OFR website at:

<https://www.thermh.org.au/research/office-for-research/research-endeavours/rmh-research-funding-program/rmh-research-grants>

Describe how your research will translate into clinical practice

Provide an action plan detailing how you intend to translate the research findings into practice.

Other Funding Opportunities

Indicate whether you give permission for the OFR to pass your application to the RMH Foundation for alternate funding opportunities.

Broad Research Area

Select the area of research most relevant to this project.

Broad Health Area

Select the area of health most relevant to this project.

Section 3: Internal Support and Timeline

INFRASTRUCTURE

Host Department

Select from the list the RMH department where the research will be carried out. If the department is not listed in the drop down list, please contact the OFR.

Feasibility

Provide evidence that there is infrastructure support to carry out the research project within the host department at no further cost to RMH. Advise in detail of the departmental and organisational support and facilities available that will enable you to conduct and complete your project.

Timeline and Milestones

Commencement Date

Enter the proposed start date of the project. Note that the final date by which the project must commence is 1 July 2024. The end date of your award will be 12 months from the start date.

Project Milestones

Provide information on the project milestones per each quarter over the duration of the project. Outline the activities or targets that will have been achieved per each quarter.

Section 4: Budget

Proposed Budget

Grant schemes are valued at up to \$25,000 each.

Provide details of the direct research costs (DRC) in the table for the scheme(s) to which you have applied. DRC are costs integral to achieving the approved research objectives of a grant and the costs must:

- » directly address the research objectives, and
- » relate to the plan, and
- » must be associated with the justified budget.

If assistance is required then clarification should be sought from the OFR at RMHRAO@mh.org.au.

The following are just a few examples of items that can be included, but not limited to:

- » Small Equipment costing less than \$10,000 that is unique to the project and is essential for the project to proceed
- » Personnel costs*
- » Patient reimbursements
- » Laboratory consumables
- » Printed materials
- » Microfilms
- » Survey or Field expenses
- » Purchase and housing costs for animals
- » Domestic and international travel costs associated with field research

*When outlining salary in your budget, you must include the classification, full-time equivalent/hours per week, duration of employment, salary plus 30% oncosts. Salaries need to take into consideration annual increments for the duration of the project.

Items that cannot be included in the budget are:

- » Institutional overheads and administrative charges; and

- » The indirect costs of research.

Justification of Budget

Explain the necessity of all the items in the budget. If the budget is more than the award amount, explain how you will complete the project with the limited funding. Provide details of other sources of funding if applicable.

Section 5: Clearances

Indicate which ethics clearances are required for your project and whether you currently hold those clearances. If so, please scan the approval certificates into one PDF file and upload to your application.

If ethics clearances are required but have not yet been obtained, you must confirm that you will gain approval.

If the application is successful, grant funding will not be released until all required approvals have been obtained and provided to RMHRAO@mh.org.au.

Applicants are expected to have obtained ethics and governance approval by 1 July 2024.

Section 6: Certification

Complete the Applicant Certification section. Confirm your certification by ticking each box.

Instructions for obtaining Head of Department or Division certification

NOTE: Do not submit your application until after you have obtained all required certifications. Before proceeding with this step, all other sections of the application must be complete.

1. Complete all sections of the application, including the Applicant certification
2. Download a PDF of the Application and the Research Proposal.
3. Download the Certification Form and complete the Application Details.
4. Provide the following documents to the appropriate person/s to sign:
 - Full Application
 - Research Proposal
 - Certification Form

Once the certification has been signed by the required parties, scan and attach to your application.

The **Certification by Head of Host Department** need only be completed where the department in which the research is being carried out differs to the Applicant's own department.

Submission Details

When you are confident that all the information is correct and you have uploaded all necessary attachments, submit your form.

After you have submitted the application form, you will receive an email confirming receipt. It is recommended you save a copy of your application for your records.

Applications must be received by 11.59PM AEST, Friday 19 January 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions

I don't know how to use the SmartyGrants system. Where can I get help?

SmartyGrants, the new online grant application service is easy to use. If you need help, an online guide is available at:
<http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>.

You can also contact Angela Magira for assistance on 03 9342 7950.

Can I submit a late application?

No. The online application is automated and late applications will not be accepted.

I don't have an appointment at RMH. Am I able to apply to any of the Grants?

With the exception of the RMH Emerging Research Leader Grant, only RMH employees can apply to the grant schemes subject to meeting all other eligibility criteria.

When will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be notified by email in March 2024.

I think my project will not start until August 2024, can I still submit an application for this funding round?

All successful applicants must be able to start on or before 1 July 2024 at the latest. If you are aware that your project will not commence until after this date, you are not eligible to apply this funding round.

My project requires ethics approval. Am I still able to submit an application without an approval?

Yes, however funding will only be released after all necessary ethics approvals have been gained and provided to the grants manager in the OFR.

APPENDIX A: Scoring Matrix

Criteria	%
<p>CIA Track Record, relative to opportunity</p> <p>Does the applicant have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the expertise and experience to conduct the research? Does their track record confirm their capacity to conduct the research? research output relative to opportunity? (Publications, presentations, etc.) <p><i>Research impact</i></p> <p>There is evidence that the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contributed to new knowledge in their field that is recognised nationally or internationally; and/or developed or improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that then had a significant impact on health and/or social well-being of the end-user or public. 	30%
<p>Research Proposal</p> <p><i>Aims and hypothesis</i></p> <p>Has the method/framework/approach been partially tested? What outcome is sought in the proposed study? What exactly is the outcome measure? Is it well integrated and adequately developed?</p> <p><i>Background</i></p> <p>Is there sufficient information about the scope of the problem? Does the background make a good case for the relevance of the experiments?</p> <p><i>Research Plan: Study Design and Method</i></p> <p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study and its design? Have any major pitfalls or problems been overlooked? Have alternative approaches been considered? Is the plan well informed by knowledge of the literature? Is the design appropriate for the aims of the research? Will the research plan successfully address the stated hypothesis or research objectives? Has there been appropriate consumer consultation?</p>	30%
<p>Reach and significance and Innovation to Health</p> <p>Does the study address an important problem? Will the work or research have an impact? Does the research demonstrate Research Impact? Is the proposed research new/novel or creative? How will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of the study on the concepts or methods that drive this field? Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative?</p>	15%
<p>Feasibility</p> <p>Are the goals concrete and achievable? Is the infrastructure required to achieve the study available?</p> <p><i>Team Quality</i></p> <p>Does the research team have the appropriate skills and expertise? Is the team capable of achieving the goals?</p>	15%
<p>Consumer and Community Engagement (½ page max)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Has there been engagement with consumers/community in the design of the project? » Is the model of engagement with consumers/community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner; Expert; Adviser; Advocate; Personal Engagement 	10%

APPENDIX B: Instructions for completing the Grant Proposal Template

Components of the Grant Proposal Template	Word or Page Limit
Lay Summary	250 words
Research Proposal	2 pages
References	1 page
Team quality & capability relevant to proposal	1 page
Consumer and community engagement	½ page

Lay Summary (250 words)

Provide a description of your study using lay terms. Include the following information as a guide:

- » Brief background/context
- » Aim of study
- » How you will go about the research
- » Information the research will provide

Research Proposal (2 pages max.)

All scientific information relating to your proposal must be contained in this section. Your Research Proposal should provide enough information so that the research approach can be assessed by reviewers with the inclusion of essential components as per table below.

Essential Components of the Research Proposal	Description
Aims	Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of the hypotheses to be tested
Background	Provide a rationale for the project.
Research Plan – methods and techniques to be used	Outline the research plan in detail, including the following where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed description of the experiment design • techniques to be used • details and justification of controls • details for appropriate blinding • strategies for randomisation and/or stratification • justification of sample-size, including power calculation • justification of statistical methods • strategies to ensure that the experimental results will be robust, unbiased and reproducible • details to achieve balance of male and female clinical participants, and male and female cell and animal models, including justification where it is unwarranted • ethical implications the research may have • expected outcomes of the research project.
Outcomes and Significance	Describe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research plan, and the potential significance of the research.

Where relevant, clinical trial and cohort studies should consider the following items in their Research Proposal:

- » Is the design of the study is appropriate?
- » Justify the need for the clinical trial
- » Explain the appropriateness of participants
- » Has the study design been informed by a systematic review?
- » Controlled studies should demonstrate the appropriateness of the assignment of interventions.
- » Does it include an adequate (defensible) sample size?

References (1 page max.)

- » Provide a list of all references cited in the application using a standard journal format.
- » Include only references to cited work.

Team Quality and Capability (1 page max.)

Provide a summary of quality and capability of the team relevant to this proposal by providing details of the following:

- » Team expertise and roles relevant to the proposed project;
- » Team influence in this specific field of research; and
- » How the team will work together to achieve the project aims

Consumer and Community Engagement (1/2-page max.)

Describe how you will ensure that consumers will be involved in the research. What model of engagement has been/will be adopted?

Applicants are asked to reference Appendices 2 and/or 3 in the [Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research](#) to describe the involvement of consumers and community.

Grant Proposal Formatting Requirements

Item	Requirements
Header	The header is allowed outside the margin rules. It must include the Project Title, Application ID and the Applicant's name.
Margins	All margins must be at least 2 cm.
Font	Must be Arial and at least 10 point.
Line Spacing	Line spacing must be set to single.
Character Spacing	Character spacing must be set to normal, with a scale of 100%.
Diagrams and Images	Diagrams and images may be included in the Research Proposal. Keep in mind that the file may be printed and photocopied in black and white for distribution to reviewers and there may be some loss of definition and colour in the images.
Files Size	Maximum 2MB
Format	PDF

Ensure that the Grant Proposal adheres to the above section before uploading it to the online application form.



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital

Advancing health for everyone, every day

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