



Synergy Grants 2022 Guidelines

Opening date:	16 February 2022
Closing date and time:	17.00 ACT local time on 13 April 2022
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Enquiries:	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance are to direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <p>Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)</p> <p>Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au</p> <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13:00 ACT local time on 13 April 2022.</p> <p>Note: NHMRC's Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within two working days. This timeframe may be longer during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p>
Date guidelines released:	16 February 2022
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

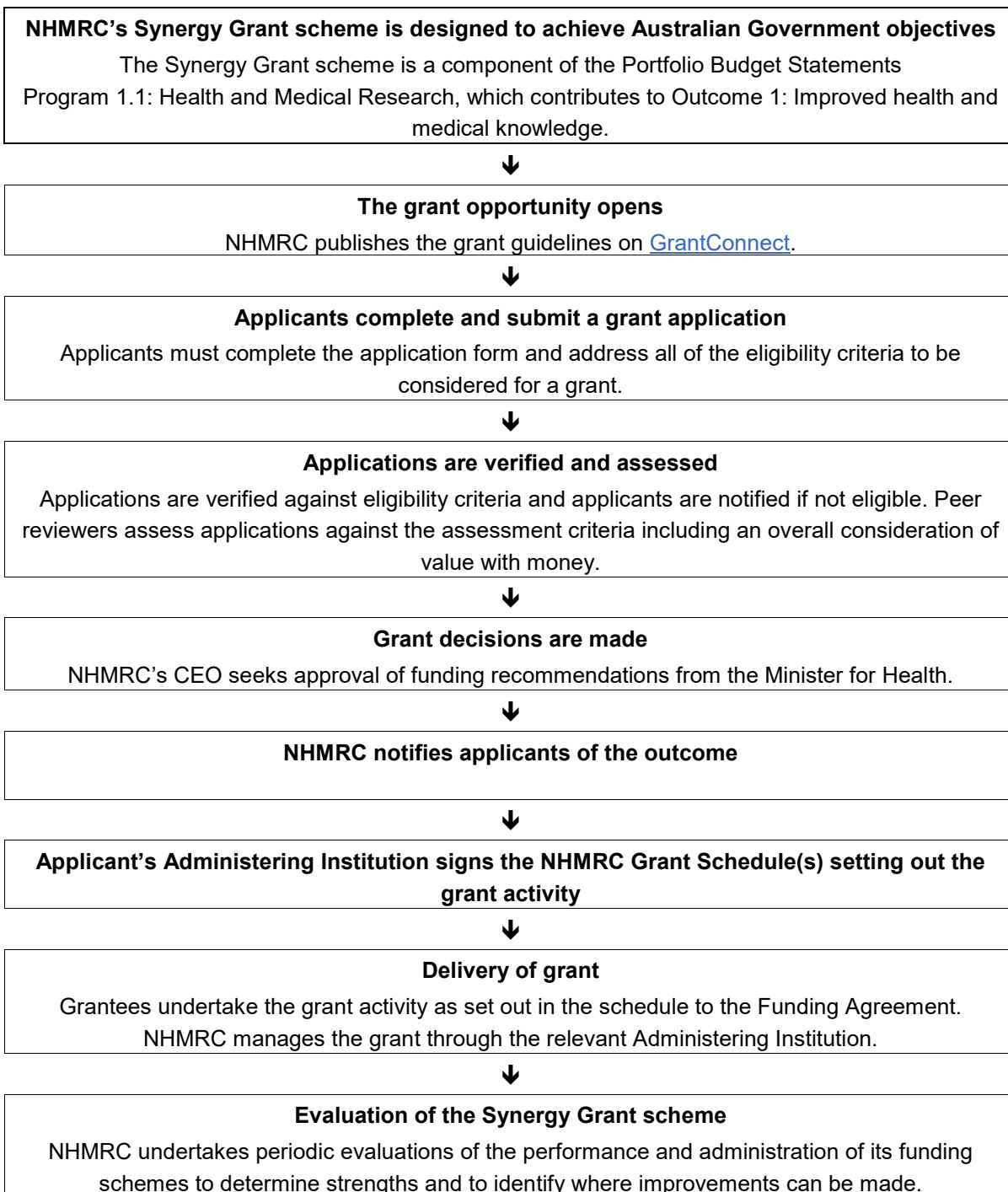
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1. Synergy Grants 2022 processes



1.1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Synergy Grants 2022 grant opportunity.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant scheme/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grants will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

GrantConnect (www.grants.gov.au) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

The Synergy Grants 2022 grant opportunity will be undertaken in accordance with the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

NHMRC recognises the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australia's health and medical research community. NHMRC's [Relative to Opportunity Policy](#) specifies that circumstances associated with the pandemic and other calamities are considered, where applicable, in assessment of an applicant's track record. In their application, applicants can outline the interruption and impact on their research productivity.

1.1.1. About NHMRC

NHMRC is the Australian Government's key entity for managing investment in, and the integrity of, health and medical research. NHMRC works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program in accordance with the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) and the CGRGs.

NHMRC awards grants through several research funding schemes to advance health and medical knowledge and to improve the health status of all Australians. NHMRC invests in the highest quality research and researchers, as determined through peer review, across the four pillars of health and medical research: basic science, clinical medicine and science, public health and health services research.

2. About the grant program

Funding for the program will be provided from the NHMRC Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), which is underpinned by section 51 of the NHMRC Act.

The objective of the Synergy Grant scheme is:

- to support outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer major questions that cannot be answered by a single investigator.

The intended outcomes of the Synergy Grant scheme are:

- multidisciplinary research that addresses major problems in all areas of human health and medical research, from discovery to translation

- highly collaborative teams of diverse researchers including by gender, career stage and cultural background, working together to address major problems in human health.

2.1. Key changes

Applicants need to note the following changes for the Synergy Grants 2022 guidelines:

- Health services research has been removed as a structural priority from the 2022 NHMRC Grant Guidelines. Targeted support for health services research will continue to be delivered through NHMRC grant schemes such as Targeted Calls for Research and the Centres of Research Excellence scheme.
- Information on the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent has been included in section 6.1. Related record keeping requirements are described in *Appendix A*.
- NHMRC will consider preprints in track record assessment. For further details on what constitutes an acceptable preprint and how to include preprints in the 'My Profile' section of Sapphire, refer to *Appendix C*.
- Application title is no longer a minimum data requirement; refer to *Appendix C*.
- Primary Institution for CIs is no longer a minimum data requirement; refer to *Appendix C*.

2.2. NHMRC structural priorities, Synergy Grants 2022 priorities and funding with other organisations

NHMRC's [Corporate Plan](#) outlines strategic priorities and major health issues for the period covered by the Plan, including how NHMRC will address these issues, and a national strategy for medical research and public health research. Each year, NHMRC identifies structural priorities for funding to deliver against certain strategic priorities.

Information on NHMRC's structural priorities, Synergy Grant scheme priorities and Synergy Grant scheme funding with other organisations is provided in *Appendix A*.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for the Synergy Grants 2022 scheme is \$50 million. NHMRC's Research Committee annually reviews and recommends indicative budget amounts to be awarded across individual funding schemes.

- A Synergy Grant provides a fixed budget of \$5 million.

3.2. Grant period

- A Synergy Grant is awarded for a fixed five-year term.

4. Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC Administering Institutions is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) and Administering Institution must ensure applications meet all eligibility requirements, as set out in this grant opportunity and within these guidelines, at the time of submission and, if successful, until the conclusion of the grant. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements will be ineligible and excluded from further consideration. Withdrawal of a submitted Synergy Grant application, after round close, will continue to affect the eligibility of applications to the Investigator and/or Ideas Grant schemes in the same funding round (i.e. where funding commences in the same year, see section 14: *Glossary*). This includes the removal of CIs from other applications and/or grants which affect Synergy Grant eligibility.

Subsequent submission of Ideas, Investigator and/or Synergy Grant applications in the same funding round will affect the eligibility of an application already submitted under the Synergy Grant scheme, irrespective of the eligibility status at the time of submission.

An eligibility ruling can be made by NHMRC at any stage following the close of applications, including during peer review. Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC will request further information, if required, to assess whether the eligibility requirements have been met.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities or other NHMRC funding schemes will not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity. All information published under this grant opportunity on [GrantConnect](#) throughout the application process will be relevant for final eligibility outcomes.

Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants of the decision.

Grant offers will be withdrawn if eligibility criteria are not met. Action will also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before an application is submitted.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

4.1.1. Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators

The minimum number of CIs allowed on a Synergy Grants 2022 application is four and the maximum number of CIs allowed is 10.

Chief Investigator 'A'

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period; the other CIs may be international collaborators.

Chief Investigators

The role and contribution of each CI must be described in the grant application. PhD students may be named as CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research. CIs are expected to remain on the grant activity for the duration of the grant, unless a variation is approved by NHMRC in accordance with the [NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy](#). NHMRC will only approve a change in CIs in exceptional circumstances and a variation request must not be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

Associate Investigators

An Associate Investigator (AI) is defined as an investigator who provides some intellectual and/or practical input into the research and whose participation may warrant inclusion of their name on any

outputs (e.g. publications). Note that AIs are not considered as part of the assessment against the Track Record criterion.

There is no restriction on who may be named as an AI on an application. However, a maximum number of 10 applies.

4.2. Multiple applications/grants

Limits apply to the number of NHMRC grants that a CI may concurrently apply for and/or hold. However, these limits do not apply to AIs.

Existing NHMRC data on current grants held will be used to determine a Synergy Grant applicant's eligibility to apply.

It is the responsibility of the CIA to ensure that all CIs are aware of the need to meet all eligibility requirements for concurrent research applications and/or grants, including any additional submissions to other schemes in the same funding round.

4.2.1. Information for Investigator, Ideas and Synergy Grant schemes

Eligibility to apply for, and hold, a Synergy Grant is linked to numbers of grants applied for or held from the Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes, as well as other NHMRC grants held, including the Synergy Grant scheme itself.

CIs can submit a total of two applications across the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes in any given funding round¹. See specific rules relating to Investigator and Ideas Grant schemes.

CIs can hold a maximum of two grants concurrently from the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes, with the following exceptions:

- CIs who hold two Ideas Grants may concurrently hold a Synergy Grant
- CIs who hold one or two Ideas Grants may apply for and hold an Investigator Grant, but their Research Support Package will be reduced by 50% for one Ideas Grant and by 100% for two Ideas Grants, adjusting accordingly, taking into consideration the Ideas Grant(s) end date (at budget calculation date).

Investigator Grant holders cannot apply for an Ideas Grant, unless they are in the final year of the Investigator Grant at the time of application.

An Investigator Grant CIA is eligible to apply for a new Investigator Grant if, at the time of application, their existing Investigator Grant will end before, or be in its final year on, 1 January of the year the new Investigator Grant is to commence.

For the purposes of eligibility, recipients of MRFF Investigator Grants will be considered equivalent to NHMRC Investigator Grants.

¹ For example, in the 2022 funding round for funding commencing in 2023 (subject to other scheme-specific eligibility requirements), CIs may submit 1x Investigator Grant application + 1x Synergy Grant application = 2 applications in total.

Detailed information on how eligibility for Synergy Grants is affected by a CI's grant applications and/or currently held grants is available at *Appendix E* (eligibility for 2022 funding round) and the eligibility tool on [NHMRC's website](#).

4.2.2. Limits on the number of Synergy Grant applications

CIs can submit a maximum of one Synergy Grant application in a grant opportunity, subject to other NHMRC grants concurrently held or applied for².

If any CI (CIA—CIJ) submits or is a CI on any other Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grant application(s) in excess of the maximum they are eligible to apply for or hold, all Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant applications on which that CI is named may be ineligible and excluded from consideration, irrespective of:

- the scheme to which they have applied, and
- that CI's position or role on the application.

Where a Synergy Grant application is eligible at the time of submission, subsequent submission of Ideas and/or Investigator Grant applications in the current funding round will retrospectively affect the eligibility of the Synergy Grant application – regardless of the eligibility status at the time of Synergy Grant submission. The application must remain eligible for the duration of peer review.

If a Synergy Grant is awarded, then application and grant capping eligibility rules will continue to affect applications to the Ideas and Investigator Grant schemes for the remainder of the round in which the Synergy Grant was awarded.

Requests for alteration of a submitted application in an attempt to satisfy eligibility criteria retrospectively (for example, removal of a CI) will not alter the eligibility outcome from those affected applications.

Refer to *Appendix E* and the [NHMRC website](#) for further information on eligibility.

4.3. Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if NHMRC identifies that:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in this grant opportunity and within these Guidelines, at the time of submission and for the duration of peer review
- it, or the CIA/any CI named on the application, contravenes an applicable law or code
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the MREA, or
- the CIA/any CI named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or Delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. For example, such decisions will generally reflect consequential action taken by NHMRC in response to findings of a serious breach of the Australian Code

² For example, if a researcher holds two Project Grants on 1 January of the year the Ideas Grant is to commence, then an applicant can only apply for one Ideas Grant.

for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code) (including a finding of research misconduct, where this term is used) or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the NHMRC Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy available from NHMRC's website.

Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA and Administering Institution certification of the application.

If a decision is made to exclude an application from further consideration, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO). The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision.

NHMRC will only respond to appeals submitted by the CIA via the Administering Institution RAO. Any appeal must meet the conditions of the NHMRC Appeals Policy.

Decisions to exclude an application may be reviewable by [NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints](#).

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible grant activities and expenditure

Funding provided by NHMRC for a grant activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that grant activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#).

5.1.1. Salary support

Synergy Grants are not normally intended to provide salary support for CIs. However, if salaries are sought for CIs, the costs must be directly associated with achieving the outcomes of the research.

CIs, including the CIA, can draw a salary from the Synergy Grant if they are based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period. CIs based overseas are not able to draw a salary, but salary support is available for research support staff based overseas (see section 5.2). Salary costs must be based on Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) outlined on the [NHMRC website](#).

Applicants can receive up to 100% salary across all NHMRC grants held. Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to a total of 100%, if allowed in the grant guidelines for the respective grant opportunities.

Associate Investigators cannot draw a salary from Synergy Grants.

5.2. Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

Synergy Grants 2022 funds are for research cost expenditure in Australia. Funding can be used to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas, including salary support for overseas-based research support staff, if the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project, and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia. In doing so, the CIA must clearly demonstrate that the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project, and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia.

See *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#) for further guidance on the expenditure of funding for a grant activity.

5.3. Duplicate funding

NHMRC may compare the research proposed in grant applications with grants previously funded, currently funded, and funded by other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council or Department of Health) and published research. NHMRC will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research aims of the research activities. If NHMRC subsequently does not consider the research activities to be sufficiently different, the applicant will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

6. The assessment criteria

Applications for Synergy Grants 2022 are assessed by peers against the assessment criteria listed below and the category descriptors at *Appendix B*.

- Knowledge Gain (30%)
- Synergy (30%)
- Track Record, relative to opportunity (40%)

Knowledge Gain - NHMRC defines 'Knowledge Gain' for the Synergy Grant scheme as the quality of the proposed research and significance of the knowledge gained. It incorporates theoretical concepts, hypotheses, research design, robustness and the extent to which the research findings will contribute to the research area and health outcomes (by advancing knowledge, practice or policy).

Synergy - NHMRC defines 'Synergy' for the Synergy Grant scheme as the quality of a diverse team's multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to solving a major health and medical research question, while building workforce capacity. AIs are not assessed as part of the research team.

Further information on the concept of 'Synergy' for the Synergy Grant scheme is at *Appendix F. Concept of Synergy*.

Track Record - NHMRC defines 'Track Record' for the Synergy Grant scheme as the value of an individual's past research achievement, relative to opportunity, not prospective achievements, using evidence. Assessment of Track Record comprises peer reviewers' consideration of:

- Publications (20%)
- Research Impact (15%)
- Leadership (5%)

Track Record assessment only includes CIs and not AIs. This assessment is undertaken relative to career stage based on two categories: researchers who are ≤10 years post-PhD or equivalent, and researchers who are >10 years post-PhD or equivalent.

Track records are assessed [Relative to Opportunity](#), taking into consideration any career disruptions where applicable – refer to *Appendix C*.

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will be considered when assessing research output and track record.

6.1. Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

As part of NHMRC's stated commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, NHMRC has requirements and processes designed to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research is of the highest scientific merit and is beneficial and acceptable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data must refer to the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- [Roadmap 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research](#)
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#), and
- [Keeping Research on Track II](#), which is a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) can be put into practice in research.

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity-building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Qualifying applications must address NHMRC's *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as follows:

- **Community engagement** - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.
- **Benefit** - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
- **Sustainability and transferability** - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue, the proposal needs to address the relationship between costs and benefits.
- **Building capability** - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

Peer reviewer(s) with specific expertise in Indigenous health research will evaluate how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*. This evaluation will be taken into consideration in the overall assessment of the application, using the assessment criteria outlined in *section 6* (it does not alter the weighting of the assessment criteria).

7. How to apply

7.1. Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

16 February 2022	Applications open in Sapphire
17.00 ACT local time	
16 March 2022	Minimum data due in Sapphire
17.00 ACT local time	
13 April 2022	Applications close in Sapphire
11 May to 08 June 2022*	Peer Review - Stage One: Applications
22 June to 20 July 2022*	Peer Review - Stage Two: Individual Track Records
October 2022*	Anticipated notification of outcomes

*Date is indicative and subject to change.

Applications must be submitted electronically using [Sapphire](#) (unless otherwise advised by NHMRC). Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and all CIs on an application to register for an account in Sapphire. Applicants who are not registered can submit a new user request via the login page of Sapphire.

Applicants should refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for detailed user instructions, or contact their RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further assistance.

Late applications will not be accepted.

7.2. Application Extensions

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted by email to help@nhmrc.gov.au before the scheme close date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or cyclones
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family³, is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

Extensions will be for a maximum of seven calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent peer review processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed, especially as eligibility decisions for some NHMRC schemes depend on an applicant's success with other schemes.

Requests for extensions submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

³ Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).

7.3. Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

Applicants are discouraged from making any changes to minimum data fields following the minimum data deadline as NHMRC uses minimum data to identify appropriate peer reviewers to assess the application. Incorrect minimum data may result in less suitable peer reviewers assessing the application.

Minimum data fields for Synergy Grants 2022 are outlined in *Appendix C. Synergy Grants 2022 Guide to Applicants* (see section 2.2 *Minimum Data Requirements*) and within Sapphire.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding. RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications are only to be only be certified once complete and ready for submission.

7.4. Application requirements

The application is to contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. Further information on what can and cannot be included in the application is provided in the Guide to Applicants at *Appendix C*.

All details included must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be ineligible.

Additional requirements and guidance in relation to each component of the application are outlined at *Appendix C*.

7.5. Attachments to the application

NHMRC requires the following documents with your application:

- Grant Proposal PDF

You must attach supporting documentation to the application in line with the instructions provided in Sapphire and *Appendix C*. Only attach requested documents. NHMRC will not consider information in attachments that it does not request.

7.6. Consumer and community involvement

The *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Statement’s purpose is to guide research institutions, researchers, consumers and community members in the active involvement of consumers and community members in all aspects of health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.

To complement the statement, NHMRC has released a Toolkit with resources on consumer and community involvement in, and expectations of, health and medical research. Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers and to use this Toolkit throughout all stages of research, including the planning and preparation of grant applications, the conduct of research and the evaluation of outcomes.

Further information on The Consumers Health Forum, the Statement and the Toolkit is available on [NHMRC's website](#). Consumer and community involvement in the proposed research will be considered, as relevant, as part of the applicable assessment criteria (see section 6).

7.7. Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC Administering Institution using Sapphire.

Certification is required firstly by the CIA and then by the Administering Institution RAO by the specified due date or the application will be ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

Once submitted to NHMRC, the application is considered final and no changes can be made.

7.7.1. CIA certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA prior to submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct.
- All eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the grant activity have familiarised themselves with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes](#) and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements, in accordance with the grant guidelines.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time. Conditions may change during the course of the grant; for example, reporting obligations may change. CIA will need to meet new/changed conditions.
- The Head of Department of the Administering Institution (and Participating Institution/s, if applicable) will ensure the appropriate facilities will be available.
- The research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.
- Grant offers may be withdrawn and action taken over the life of the grant, if eligibility criteria to accept and/or continue holding a grant are not met.

7.7.2. Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution prior to submitting an application:

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- The institution holds the relevant applicant documentation required to support eligibility if requested by NHMRC.
- CIA is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time of accepting the successful grant.
- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 80% of the funding period

- The appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the funding period.
- Approval of the grant activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO is authorised to certify and submit applications.

7.8. Retracted publications

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, the applicant must promptly notify their RAO. The RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity of the retraction by email (help@nhmrc.gov.au) with an explanation of the reasons for the retraction.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's track record, the applicant must immediately record that information in their Profile in Sapphire.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, the applicant should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, an applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the RAO must advise NHMRC in writing (to help@nhmrc.gov.au), clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

7.9. Withdrawal of applications

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC.

An application may be 'marked for deletion' by the applicant in Sapphire before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the grant opportunity has closed. The application will not be deleted while the grant opportunity remains open for application submission.

The withdrawal of a submitted application after the grant opportunity has closed does not impact on an applicant's eligibility status (that application will still count towards application limits), refer to section 4.2.2.

7.10. Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's RAO.

All policy enquiries must be submitted in writing by the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC's Research Help Centre. Policy enquiries from applicants will be re-directed to the RAO. Frequently asked policy questions will be addressed via the scheme's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, which will be updated on GrantConnect as required and should be reviewed before submitting a query.

NHMRC's Research Help Centre details:

Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au

Refer to the [Research Help Centre webpage](#) for opening hours.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of grant applications

NHMRC considers applications through a targeted competitive grant process. Applications are required to meet eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria (see section 6) by independent peer reviewers.

The extent to which applications represent value for money is considered as part of the broader category descriptors at *Appendix B*, which includes assessment of applications against the scheme's objectives and intended outcomes (see section 2. *About the grant program*), the quality of the proposed research and the capability of the applicant(s).

8.1.1. Who will assess applications?

NHMRC's peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application to ensure that only the highest quality, value with money research is recommended for funding.

Applicants must not seek to identify or make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment, in keeping with NHMRC's principles of impartial and independent peer review. Seeking to influence the process or outcomes of peer review may constitute a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

8.1.2. Synergy Grant assessment process

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness. Peer review processes are fair and seen to be fair by all involved.
- Transparency. All stages of peer review are transparent.
- Independence. Peer reviewers provide independent advice. There is also independent oversight of peer review processes by independent Chairs and Observers.
- Appropriateness and balance. The experience, expertise and operation of peer reviewers are appropriate to the goals and scale of the funding vehicle.
- Research community participation. Persons holding taxpayer-funded grants should willingly make themselves available to participate in peer review processes, including mentoring of junior researchers, whenever possible.
- Confidentiality. Participants respect that confidentiality is important to the fairness and robustness of peer review.
- Impartiality. Peer review is objective and impartial, with appropriate processes in place to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest (CoI).
- Quality and excellence. NHMRC will continue to introduce evidence-based improvements into its processes to achieve the highest quality decision-making through peer review.

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an initial assessment of applications against the Synergy and Knowledge Gain assessment criteria (see *section 6*). The most competitive applications that meet a threshold score for the Synergy and Knowledge Gain criteria will be shortlisted.

Peer reviewers will independently assess the track records of individual CIs on shortlisted applications, relative to opportunity and taking into account career disruptions, against the Track Record assessment criterion. The overall scores of shortlisted applications will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is on the [NHMRC website](#).

8.2. Who will approve grants?

In accordance with paragraph 7(1)(c) of the NHMRC Act, NHMRC's CEO makes recommendations on expenditure from the MREA to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC. The Minister, acting on the advice of the CEO, determines expenditure from the MREA (paragraph 51 (2) of the NHMRC Act).

9. Notification of application outcomes

NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible, following the approval of grants. Advice of outcomes may occur before the approval of grants if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons.

NHMRC may advise applicants and their Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome under embargo. This means that the information must not be made public until the embargo is lifted. During the embargo period, applicants must not publicise the information or post comments about the grant outcomes in public domains such as social forums, websites, journals or newspapers. [NHMRC's website](#) provides further information on what can and cannot happen where information on a grant is released under embargo.

10. Successful grant applications

CIAs whose applications are approved for funding will have access to a letter of offer through Sapphire. Administering Institutions responsible for administering approved applications will also have access to the letter of offer and to the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online signing/acceptance process within Sapphire.

NHMRC's CEO or delegate may withdraw or vary an offer of a grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue.

10.1. Information required from grantees

Grantees may be required to supply additional information about their grant activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the letter of offer.

10.2. Obligations and approvals

NHMRC-funded grant activities must comply with applicable guidelines, laws and approval requirements. For further information see [NHMRC's website](#).

The University Foreign Interference Taskforce [Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector](#) (UFIT Guidelines) have been developed to protect the university sector against foreign interference. NHMRC has determined that these Guidelines are to be implemented by all NHMRC Administering Institutions, including non-university institutions.

Institutions applying for NHMRC funding (both Administering and Participating Institutions) must also be aware of their obligations under The [National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse – Grant Connected Policy](#). Relevant institutions which have been named in an application for the Redress Scheme or named in the Royal Commission, and which have not joined the Redress Scheme, will be ineligible to access NHMRC funding.

Administering Institutions, Participating Institutions and researchers who are working with children need to comply with the requirements of the [Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#). Organisations involved need to implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).

NOTE: NHMRC research with ethics and biosafety considerations must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies.

10.3. NHMRC Funding Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these Grant Guidelines), which is a legal agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution. Schedule(s) are accepted by the Administering Institution electronically in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.

Details of the Funding Agreement can be found on [NHMRC's website](#) under Funding Agreement and Deeds of Agreement. A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between NHMRC and the Administering Institution is in place, and
- the appropriate Schedule to the Funding Agreement is executed in accordance with clause 2.3 of the Funding Agreement.

10.3.1. Responsible and ethical conduct of research

NHMRC expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Under the Funding Agreement, NHMRC funded research must be conducted in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Further information about the Code can be found on [NHMRC's website](#).

10.4. NHMRC policies

Under the Funding Agreement, it is the responsibility of Administering Institutions and CIs to be aware of, and comply with, all relevant legislation and policies relating to the conduct of the grant activity. For further information see [NHMRC's website](#).

10.5. Payments

Payments will commence once all outstanding obligations (e.g. conditions, eligibility rules or data requirements specified in the Schedule to the Funding Agreement, relevant grant guidelines or letter of offer) have been met by the CIA and the Administering Institution.

10.6. Suspension of grants

NHMRC funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, requests made by the CIA. Variations will generally only be granted if allowed in the grant guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC, in circumstances as set out in the Funding Agreement, including when there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of an alleged breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (including research misconduct, where this term is used).

10.7. Tax implications

All amounts referred to in these Grant Guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation matters associated with the grant.

11. Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website within 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by the CGRGs.

12. How NHMRC monitors grant activity

12.1. Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees are to report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the grant activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant guidelines and the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant are to be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in Sapphire. For information on grant variations see the *NHMRC Grantee Variations Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Note that CIs are expected to remain on the grant for the full funding period and NHMRC will only approve changes to CIs in exceptional circumstances. Before a CIA applies for a grant variation, they and the relevant RAO will need to confirm that all CIs have agreed to the variation, noting the impact that it may have on their suite of grants and their eligibility to hold/apply for other grants. Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements.

12.2. Reporting

Administering Institutions are required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

12.2.1. Financial reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant or upon transfer to a new Administering Institution, a financial acquittal is also required. Refer to [NHMRC's website](#) for details of format and timing.

12.2.2. Non-financial reports

The Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each grant activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on [NHMRC's website](#). While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC

grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met prior to acceptance of a new grant.

Information included in the Final Report may be publicly released. Use of this information may include publication on [NHMRC's website](#), publicity (including release to the media) and the promotion of research achievements.

All information provided to NHMRC in reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funded research projects or funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

12.3. Evaluation of the Synergy Grant scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its grant opportunities to determine their effectiveness and to identify where improvements can be made.

12.4. Open Access Policy

NHMRC supports the sharing of outputs from NHMRC funded research including publications and data. The aims of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* are to mandate the open access sharing of publications and encourage innovative open access to research data. This policy also requires that patents resulting from NHMRC funding be made findable through listing in SourceIP. NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

Combined, these approaches will help to increase reuse of data, improve research integrity and contribute to a stronger knowledge economy. Open access will also assist with reporting and demonstration of research achievement, improve track record assessment processes for the long term and contribute to better collaborations.

All recipients of NHMRC grants must comply with all elements of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* as a condition of funding.

13. Probity

13.1. Complaints process

Applicants or grantees can lodge a formal complaint about an NHMRC process related to funding via the Administering Institution's RAO and in writing to NHMRC Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au. Complaints must be lodged within 28 days of the relevant NHMRC decision or action. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints. NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision.

If applicants or grantees are dissatisfied with the response from the NHMRC Complaints Team, you can raise your concerns with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints (the Commissioner). Note that the Commissioner of Complaints does not undertake a merits review. Refer to NHMRC's Complaints Policy and the Commissioner of Complaints [webpage](#) for further information.

Applicants or grantees can complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman if they do not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC and, where relevant, the Commissioner of Complaints.

13.2. Conflicts of Interest

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that interests of any kind are dealt with consistently, transparently and with rigour, in accordance with sections 16A and 16B of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (made under the subsection 29(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)).

Applicants are not required to declare actual or perceived interests.

To manage any conflicts of interest with applicants, NHMRC requires peer review participants to declare interests, actual or perceived, and sign deeds of confidentiality. Peer review participants declare any direct or indirect, pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest, which is reviewed by NHMRC, prior to being granted full access to an application. Any peer reviewer who is determined by NHMRC to have a 'high' conflict of interest will not be able to participate in the review of that application.

By managing any conflict, NHMRC maintains objectivity, impartiality and integrity in the assessment of applications. Further information relating to the conflict of interest process is available in the Synergy Grants 2022 Peer Review Guidelines.

13.3. Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, and the *Privacy Act 1988*. The [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#) details the types of personal or sensitive information that may be collected by NHMRC and how it will be handled. Applicants need to familiarise themselves with the NHMRC Privacy Policy before providing personal information to NHMRC.

Information that is generally regarded as confidential information is application information and any other information specifically identified as such by applicants and grantees, and will be received by NHMRC on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidentiality.

NHMRC may disclose personal and/or confidential information to:

- overseas entities, Australian, State/Territory or local government agencies, organisations or individuals where necessary to assess an application or to administer a grant
- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the grant scheme effectively
- employees and contractors of NHMRC to research, assess, monitor and analyse schemes and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in reports and consultations
- NHMRC approved Administering Institutions' Research Administration Offices
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

In addition, NHMRC will provide certain limited personal information of the Chief Investigator/s included in an application to Administering Institutions for the purpose of certification of eligibility requirements.

13.4. Freedom of information

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government's transparency and accountability requirements. Freedom of Information laws facilitate the general public's access to documents held by national government agencies, including application and funding documentation relating to NHMRC researchers. This right of access is limited where documents, or parts of documents, are exempt under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Researchers are to familiarise themselves with NHMRC's Freedom of Information procedures before submitting an application. Further information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, NHMRC's Freedom of Information application process and relevant contacts can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent	Identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice given on the AIATSIS website (https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent ▪ identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and ▪ being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the announcement of the grant, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)</i>	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
final year	The final 12 calendar months of a grant.

Term	Definition
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the NHMRC Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. It is available on NHMRC's website .
funding round	Collectively refers to the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant opportunities commencing funding in the same year.
grant	As defined in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
grant activity	Defined as "Research Activity" in the NHMRC Funding Agreement.
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at www.grants.gov.au.</p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities must publish grant opportunities on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
grant program	A group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program. This is referred to as a scheme in this document.
Grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant. For NHMRC's purposes, grants are awarded to the Administering Institution for the benefit of the grant recipients (however described).
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	The purpose of the MREA is to provide assistance to Federal and State Government Departments, institutions, universities and/or persons engaged in medical research.
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	<p>The MRFF was established on 26 August 2015 by the <i>Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015</i> (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health website:</p> <p>https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund</p>
peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.

Term	Definition
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs (schemes). A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program (scheme) associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Probity Event	As defined in the <i>NHMRC Funding Agreement</i> .
Sapphire	NHMRC's electronic, secure system that allows research administrators, applicants, assessors, grant holders and NHMRC staff to manage all aspects of the granting lifecycle.
Schedule	As defined in the <i>NHMRC Funding Agreement</i> .

Appendix A. NHMRC structural priorities, Synergy Grants 2022 priorities and funding organisations

Each year, NHMRC identifies key structural priorities for funding to help achieve its broader goals. Applications that meet structural priorities may be funded in order of merit, supplementary to applications within the budget for the grant opportunity, based on advice from NHMRC's Research Committee. NHMRC's current key structural priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers.
- Female lead investigators.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and researchers

NHMRC is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourages applications that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Accordingly, NHMRC is committed to allocating at least five per cent of the annual allocation from its Medical Research Endowment Account to research directed at improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Support for health and medical research and research translation is central to achieving improvements in this area. It is also important to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and how this diversity relates to health issues in these communities.

Applicants identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent are asked to indicate this in their Sapphire profile.

Identification of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent follows the advice provided on the AIATSIS website (<https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history/you-start/proof-aboriginality>). This states that government agencies and communities usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, namely:

- being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and
- being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence, consistent with AIATSIS guidance, of a Chief Investigator A's identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and must provide this evidence to NHMRC, if requested.

Female Lead Investigators

Funding outcomes have highlighted the underrepresentation of female chief investigators across many of NHMRC's funding schemes. By providing structural priority funding for female lead investigators, NHMRC is seeking to give more outstanding female researchers the opportunity to receive funding and to encourage more to apply.

Synergy Grants 2022 priority areas

In addition to these key priorities, NHMRC may award Synergy Grants that:

- address other defined structural priorities
- acknowledge prominent Australians' contributions to health and medical research (Special Awards), and/or

- are funded with partner organisations.

Special Awards

Details of NHMRC awards will be available on the NHMRC website.

Synergy Grants funded by other organisations

Synergy Grants may be funded by or in conjunction with other organisations. These grants offer opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the priorities and research interests of the partner organisations.

Some funding partners may require a separate application to be provided to them, or may have specific criteria and requirements, in addition to those of NHMRC. Applicants are to contact the funding partner to identify any additional requirements.

For the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988*, applicants and other persons whose details appear in grant applications (e.g. other investigators) need to be aware that NHMRC may provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes, to the funding organisation(s) nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information is to enable potential funding partners to assess the application's eligibility for funding under the funding organisation's policies.

In the event that a funding partner is unable to fulfil its obligation to a co-funded grant, NHMRC will continue to support the Synergy Grant recipient under the conditions that would have been awarded by NHMRC.

Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the funding partner, including Synergy grants that may have been fully funded by the funding partner, will not be supported by NHMRC.

Further information on Synergy Grants funded by other organisations is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

The following organisations are expected to partner with NHMRC in funding grants under this grant opportunity:

- Sanfilippo Children's Foundation

Appendix B. Synergy Grants 2022 Category Descriptors

The following category descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria.

While the category descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met.

The category descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. Peer reviewers will consistently refer to these category descriptors to ensure thorough, equitable and transparent assessment of applications.

Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions should be considered when assessing research output and track record.

Knowledge Gain (30%) and Synergy (30%)

Table 1: Category Descriptors for Knowledge Gain and Synergy

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
7 Exceptional	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensively integrates complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, that are essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by an extremely well justified and reasoned hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are flawless, highly developed, completely complementary and integrated and highly appropriate ○ the integration of research components is extremely likely to result in novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates to an extremely high level that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue of critical importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • Collectively has or has access to exceptional technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes • Will result in extremely significant and transformative changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or 	<p>The proposed research team provides exceptional synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators' diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Multidisciplinary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensively demonstrates why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily • Integrates researchers with highly complementary expertise and insights across disciplines necessary and sufficient to address the major research question and lead to transformative outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that is extremely likely to produce sustainable synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs.

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<p>policy underpinning human health issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will lead to extremely significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) • Would be extremely competitive with the best, similar, research proposals internationally. 	<p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to an extremely high degree, comprehensive and suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources • Demonstrates sustainable collaborations that are highly likely to extend beyond the life of the project • Demonstrates each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) • Incorporates comprehensive and exceptional strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).
6 Outstanding	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, that are essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by a very well justified and reasoned hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are well developed, complementary and integrated and highly appropriate with only a few minor weaknesses 	<p>The proposed research team provides outstanding synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators' diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p>

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the integration of research components is highly likely to result in novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates to a very high level that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue that is very important to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • Collectively has or has access to outstanding technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes • Will result in very highly significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • Will lead to very highly significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) • Would be highly competitive with the best, similar, research proposals internationally. 	<p><u>Multidisciplinarity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to a very high degree why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily • Integrates researchers with complementary expertise and insights across disciplines necessary and sufficient to address the major research question and lead to substantial outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that is highly likely to produce sustainable synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to a very high degree, comprehensive and suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources • Demonstrates sustainable collaborations that are highly likely to extend beyond the life of the project • Demonstrates each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) • Incorporates comprehensive and outstanding strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
		groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).
5 Excellent	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, that are essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by a well justified and reasoned hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are well developed, complementary and integrated and highly appropriate with several minor weaknesses ○ the integration of research components is likely to result in novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates to a high level that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue that is of considerable importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • Collectively has or has access to excellent technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes • Will result in highly significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • Will lead to highly significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin- 	<p>The proposed research team provides excellent synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators' diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Multidisciplinary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to a high degree why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily • Integrates researchers with complementary expertise and insights across disciplines necessary and sufficient to address the major research question and lead to substantial outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that is likely to produce sustainable synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs.

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<p>offs, licensing etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be competitive with the best, similar, research proposals internationally. 	<p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to a high degree, comprehensive and suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources • Demonstrates sustainable collaborations that are likely to extend beyond the life of the project • Demonstrates each investigator’s previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) • Incorporates comprehensive and excellent strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).
4 Very Good	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates broadly complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, that are essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by a well justified and reasoned hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are well developed, broadly complementary and integrated and highly appropriate with a few minor 	<p>The proposed research team provides very good synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators’ diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p>

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<p>concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the integration of research components is likely to result in novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue that is of importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • Collectively has or has access to very good technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes • Likely to result in significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • Likely to lead to significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) • Would be likely to be competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p><u>Multidisciplinarity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadly demonstrates why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily • Integrates researchers with complementary expertise and insights across disciplines necessary and sufficient to address the major research question and likely lead to substantial outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that could produce sustainable synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates comprehensive and suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources • Demonstrates sustainable collaborations that could extend beyond the life of the project • Demonstrates each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) • Incorporates comprehensive and very good strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
		cultures).
3 Good	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates broadly complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by a justified and sound hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are developed, broadly complementary and integrated and appropriate with several minor concerns ○ the integration of research components could result in novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue that is of some importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • Collectively has or has access to good technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes • Could result in significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • Could lead to significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) 	<p>The proposed research team provides good synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators' diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Multidisciplinary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely demonstrates why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily. • Integrates researchers with expertise and insights across disciplines necessary and sufficient to address the major research question and could lead to substantial outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that could in general produce sustainable synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be somewhat competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates collaborations that could extend beyond the life of the project • Demonstrates each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) • Incorporates clear and good strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).
2 Satisfactory	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates broadly complementary information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ is supported by a reasoned hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses are generally sound, complementary and integrated but may lack clarity in some aspects and/or may contain notable weaknesses/concerns ○ the integration of research components could result in some novel conceptual approaches and insights. • Demonstrates that the research proposal tackles a major question addressing an issue that is of marginal importance to advance the research or health area (not 	<p>The proposed research team provides moderate synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) that will provide expertise and build capacity aligned to the research question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides investigators' diverse experience and vital perspectives, without which the research question cannot be addressed. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Multidisciplinary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates to some degree why the research could require the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily, but poses some concerns

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<p>prevalence or magnitude of the issue)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collectively has or has access to some/most but not all of the technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes Could result in appreciable improvements/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues Could lead to moderately significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) Would be marginally competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates researchers with expertise and insights across disciplines that are relevant to the major research question and may lead to improved outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieves integration of the various researchers' skills and perspectives that could produce some synergy and novel outcomes, which would not be possible by the CIs pursuing the components as separate projects, or with a different composition of CIs. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates moderately suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources Demonstrates to some extent collaborations that may extend beyond the life of the project. Demonstrates to some extent each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) Incorporates moderate strategies to integrate, provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).
1 Marginal to Poor	<p>The proposed multidisciplinary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not integrate information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories, from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge, essential to solve a major research question that is beyond the scope of 	<p>The proposed research team provides limited synergy (diversity, multidisciplinary and collaborative gain) as it:</p> <p><u>Diversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not comprise a diverse team (in terms of gender, career stage and/or researchers from different cultures) or the

Category	Knowledge gain	Synergy
	<p>a single discipline or area of research practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ has a weak hypothesis/hypotheses/rationale ○ the scientific framework, design, methods and analyses have significant shortcomings and may contain major weaknesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fails to demonstrate that the research proposal tackles a major research question ● Does not have access to the technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, or access to additional expertise necessary to achieve project outcomes ● Is unlikely to result in improvements/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues of significance ● Is unlikely to lead to research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing etc.) of significance ● Is unlikely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally. 	<p>proposed team is diverse but investigators do not provide diverse experience and vital perspectives aligned to the research question.</p> <p>AND</p> <p><u>Multidisciplinarity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not demonstrate why the research requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines and has no processes to ensure the research question is addressed using these different disciplines complementarily ● Does not integrate researchers with expertise and insights across disciplines necessary to address the major research question. <p>AND</p> <p><u>Collaborative gain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not demonstrate suitable plan(s) for the research team to work synergistically, including milestones and evaluation measures and strategies for intellectual exchange, governance, grant sharing and resources ● Does not demonstrate collaborations that are likely to extend beyond the life of the project ● Does not demonstrate each investigator's previous experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators) ● Does not incorporate strategies to integrate provide mentoring and development opportunities and increase capability of under-represented groups/researchers (e.g. health professionals, consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures).

Track Record, relative to opportunity (40%)

Publications (20%)

Table 2: Publications

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an exceptional record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an outstanding record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an excellent record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
4	Very Good	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a very good record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
3	Good	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a good record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a satisfactory record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
1	Weak or limited	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a weak or limited record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science

Research Impact (15%)

Table 3: Reach and significance of the research impact

Less than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)	Category Descriptors			More than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)
	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	
7	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a paradigm changing development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised across multiple countries, (b) significant influence beyond the specific field of research or (c) the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised across multiple countries/beneficiaries 	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	7
		<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a paradigm changing development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had a significant impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a profound impact on health with a modest reach, (c) profoundly improved the health of Australia's Indigenous people or (d) led to a significant, scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a large number of communities <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) the generation of significant commercial income or (b) a profound reduction in healthcare costs <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have had (a) a significant impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a national level or across multiple countries or (b) a profound impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a national level or across multiple countries 	an outstanding knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	6

Less than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)	Category Descriptors			More than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)
	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	
7	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a major development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised nationally or across multiple countries, (b) a major influence beyond the specific field of research or (c) a major influence on the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised nationally or across multiple countries/beneficiaries <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an important development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had a major impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a significant impact on health with a modest reach, (c) led to a significant improvement in the health of Australia's Indigenous people or (d) led to major scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a number of communities 	an excellent knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	5
6	an outstanding knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) the generation of considerable commercial income or (b) a major reduction in healthcare costs <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have either had (a) a major impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a local, state/territory or national level or (b) a significant impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a local, state/territory or national level 	a very good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	4

Less than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)	Category Descriptors			More than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)
	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	
5	an excellent knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a change that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised nationally or across multiple countries, (b) had some influence beyond the specific field of research, or (c) some influence on the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised nationally or across multiple countries/beneficiaries <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had some impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a major impact on health with a modest reach, (c) led to a major improvement in the health of Australia's Indigenous people, or (d) led to some scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a small number of communities <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) the generation of some commercial income or (b) some reduction in healthcare costs <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have had (a) some impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a local, state/territory or national level or (b) an impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a local, state/territory or national level 	a good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	3
4	a very good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact			
3	a good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact		a satisfactory knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	2
2	a satisfactory knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact			

Less than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)	Category Descriptors			More than 10 years post-PhD (taking into account career disruptions)
	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact	There is robust, verifiable evidence of:	
1	a weak or limited knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence	<p>There is limited or weak evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of new knowledge • improved health systems and services • reductions in health care costs or economic growth • improvements in social well-being, equality or social inclusion. 	a weak or limited knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence	1

Table 4: Research Program’s contribution to the Research Impact

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an exceptional contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an outstanding contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an excellent contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
4	Very good	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a very good contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
3	Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a good contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a satisfactory contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
1	Weak, Limited or No	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, the applicant’s research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a weak, limited or no contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or • the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence

Table 5: Applicant's contribution to Research Program

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors	
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an exceptional contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Leadership AND/OR instrumental role in a research program
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an outstanding contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an excellent contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Leadership of a component AND/OR collaborative role (e.g. co-investigator) in a research program
4	Very Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a very good contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
3	Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a good contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Contribution to a research program
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a satisfactory contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
1	Weak, Limited or No	Relative to opportunity and to their field, the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a weak, limited or no contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence 	Limited or no contribution to a research program

Leadership (5%)

Table 6: Leadership

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond institution.
6	Outstanding	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates outstanding performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
5	Excellent	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates excellent performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
4	Very Good	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates very good performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
3	Good	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates good performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
2	Satisfactory	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates satisfactory performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
1	Weak or limited	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates weak or limited performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.

Appendix C. Synergy Grants 2022 Guide to Applicants

1. Preparing an application

The following sections provide additional advice about parts of the application that are specific to Synergy Grants 2022:

- Refer to the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#) for general instructions on how to apply for a grant in Sapphire.
- Synergy Grants 2022 scheme-specific policy and instructions for applying in Sapphire (grey boxes) are provided in this Appendix.
- For further assistance during the application process, see section 7. *How to apply* of the Guidelines.

2. Application Requirements

A complete application is comprised of:

- Completed mandatory sections of 'My Profile' Requirements (section 3), and 'My Profile' Requirements for Synergy Grants 2022 (section 4)
- Completed application form (section 5)
- Grant Proposal as an attachment (section 5.9).

Applications must comply with all requirements as set out in the Synergy Grants 2022 Guidelines. Failure to adhere to any of these requirements may result in non-acceptance or exclusion of your application (see section 4. *Eligibility criteria* of the Guidelines).

2.1 Use of gender neutral language

The aim of [NHMRC's Gender Equality Strategy \(2018–2021\)](#) is to achieve a gender-equal health and medical research workforce by supporting an increase in the retention and progression of women. Using gender-neutral language is one strategy to support this goal, serving to de-emphasise gender in the assessment of grant applications and reduce the potential impact of unconscious bias.

NHMRC strongly encourages the use of gender-neutral language in applications. This means that, wherever possible and appropriate, applicants should avoid the use of words that reveal their gender or the gender of team members. These words include (but are not limited to) her, him, she, he, Mr, Ms, Mrs and Miss, as well as first names and terms such as 'maternity leave'.

It is recognised that there will be instances where reference to the gender of applicants or team members is unavoidable or desirable.

However, wherever possible and relevant, applicants should:

- use the first person, *i.e. I/me/my*, rather than referring to themselves in the third person, or if third person is preferred, then use CI last-name or CIA
- use CIB, CIC, etc. or plural pronouns, *i.e. their/they*, when referring to others, rather than he/she or her/his
- use the format 'CI last-name', *e.g. CI Jones*, rather than using first names when referring to individuals

- use gender-neutral nouns, e.g. *researcher, staff*, etc., including when completing career disruption information, if relevant, e.g. *parental leave or approved leave*, rather than maternity/paternity leave,
- review the application for instances of ‘masculine form by default’ prior to submission and remove them, e.g., ‘every team member will manage his data according to this protocol’ can instead use the plural pronoun *their*.

Whether or not gender-neutral language is used, it is important to describe the practical impact of the career circumstance on the applicant’s research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to their career stage.

Note the aim is to de-emphasise **applicant** gender. Where gender is important for the research being proposed, it should be included in the application. There is no penalty for the use of gendered language in applications.

2.2 Minimum Data Requirements

Minimum data must be entered in Sapphire by the specified due date. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information and are discouraged from making changes to this information after minimum data close. NHMRC uses this information to identify peer reviewers who are best suited to assess the application.

Minimum data are indicated in Sapphire by a blue flag (🚩), and are comprised of:

- Administering Institution
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Research Focus (yes/no)
- Project synopsis
- Privacy agreement
- Research Classification:
 - Broad Research Area
 - Field(s) of Research
 - Peer Review Areas
 - Research Keywords
- Chief Investigator A (complete CIA Role and Name).

Minimum data must be entered into Sapphire by 16 March 2022, 17.00 ACT local time. Applicants are to refer to section 7.3 *Minimum data requirements* of the Guidelines for further information.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.

Note: Previous minimum data requirements, ‘Primary Institution for CIs’, and ‘Application title’ are not applicable to Synergy Grants 2022, refer to section 2.1 *Key changes* of the Guidelines.

Research Administration Officers (RAOs) are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications only require certification once complete and ready for submission to NHMRC.

3. ‘My Profile’ Requirements

Within an applicant’s profile in Sapphire, there is mandatory information that must be provided and/or updated prior to submitting an application (see section 7. *How to apply* of the Guidelines).

This information includes personal details, academic/research interests, and peer review information.

Mandatory Profile information is indicated by a red asterisk in Sapphire (*). This requirement applies to all Chief Investigators (CIs) named on the application.

Please verify that each of the CIs has completed and/or updated their profiles before an application is certified, noting that an error message will appear when a CI is added as a team member, if they have not completed all mandatory fields in their Profile. Existing NHMRC grant holders should not commence or be named on an application until all mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete.

3.1 About My Profile

Provide your primary institution name under Primary Institution. If this is an Administering Institution, the Research Administration Officers will have access to view your profile; you may also allow the RAO to edit your profile.

Note: To update your Primary Institution name in Sapphire, you will need to go to 'Account Settings', 'Personal details' and click on 'Primary Institution'.

3.2 Personal information

Provide your most current details in this section. It is important that your title, names, phone and email details are up to date as these are the details on which NHMRC relies to contact you.

3.3 Academic Information

Indicate whether you have a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and if applicable, the pass date (year) of your thesis (not the date of conferral).

3.4 Peer Review Information

Select a Broad Research Area and 5-10 Research Keywords most applicable to your main area of research. You can also provide further detail about your research interests or areas of expertise. This could include, but is not limited to, your research methodologies, student supervision and areas in which you have published.

You can add as many Fields of Research as required. Indicate when you started your research in that field, the classification of the research (e.g. primary), and whether the research is current or terminated. Individuals are encouraged to list all Fields of Research. Only current Fields of Research will be displayed.

Note: An opportunity is provided in the application to select research areas, fields of research and keywords that best describe your research proposal, as opposed to your personal research interests. The above information will not determine the peer reviewers selected for your application.

3.5 Unavailability Calendar

Peer Review is an integral part of NHMRC funding schemes. NHMRC grant recipients have obligations to contribute to the assessment of applications (as outlined in the [NHMRC Funding Agreement](#)). If you are not available to act as a peer reviewer, please provide a statement detailing your reasons, and the period for which you are unavailable. To maintain the list of

available peer reviewers within Sapphire, NHMRC requests that all applicants update their availability routinely. This will avoid unnecessary contact if you are unavailable.

3.6 Contributions to NHMRC

Please indicate in which role you have contributed to NHMRC, if you have previously participated in an advisory, peer review, guideline development or other NHMRC activity requiring expert stakeholder input via formal appointment.

Click '+' to start a new entry to specify the below:

- Select a 'Contribution Role', from the drop down menu
- Indicate the year in which you held the Contribution Role.
- Indicate the number of times you acted in that role in each year.

You will need to create a new entry for each type of contribution in a particular year.

4. 'My Profile' Requirements specific to the Synergy Grant scheme

The following sections provide advice about parts of the application that are specific to the Synergy Grant scheme. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, you are only required to complete the sections outlined below. If you enter more information than is required, only the required information will be imported into your application.

It is important that relevant 'My Profile' information (for all CIs) is up to date at the time of application submission, as it is used to contact applicants, imported into the application and used by peer reviewers. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's funding profile and to capture grant outcomes. 'My Profile' information can be updated at any time. However, any changes made to 'My Profile' (for any CI) after Chief Investigator A (CIA) certification will not appear in the submitted application.

Instructions for entering 'My Profile' information in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Note: You are required to list research outputs in relevant subsections of your profile. You are encouraged to link the entered research output to NHMRC Grant IDs, where applicable.

4.1 Career Disruptions (within the last 10 years)

NHMRC is committed to ensuring that every applicant is treated fairly, and this means that it recognises some applicants will have had career disruptions that should be considered when evaluating their track record and eligibility. If applicable, applicants should use this opportunity to declare any career disruptions that may be relevant to their career history.

The period of career disruption may be used to determine an applicant's eligibility for a grant opportunity or to allow additional track record information to be considered during assessment.

Career Disruption

A career disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities. For guidance on what constitutes a career disruption and how it is considered, refer to *Appendix D*.

Career disruption claims will not be considered for applications that fail to comply with the following requirements.

The last 10 years of Career Disruptions will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Disruption Type

To enter a Career Disruption, click '+'. Select a 'Disruption type' from the drop down menu.

Impact

Applicants are required to provide a brief explanation of the impact the career disruption(s) has had on their research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to their career stage, including the percentage (%) full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Career Disruption. Do not describe the nature of the career disruption in this field.

Note that the information in this field will be provided to peer reviewers.

Additional Research Outputs

Provide details of publications only that you would like to claim in relation to this Career Disruption.

Dates

Applicants are required to nominate the periods when they have had a disruption (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

4.2 Relative to Opportunity (within the last 10 years)

If applicable, the applicant can use this section to provide details of any [relative to opportunity](#) considerations and the effect they have had on their research and research achievements, including (but not limited to) interruptions due to calamities e.g. bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last 10 years of Relative to Opportunity will be included for each CI and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Circumstances

Provide a brief explanation of the type of Relative to Opportunity circumstance.

Impact

Provide a brief explanation of the impact this has had on your research, research achievements and associated productivity relative to stage of career.

Date

You are required to nominate the periods where you have had a relative to opportunity circumstance (approximate dates). Entries will be listed in reverse chronological order.

4.3 Publications

Publication information can be entered into Sapphire manually, or by data import. Supported formats include ORCID import and EndNote® Library import via .xml file. Further details on how to upload publications are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#). To manually create a new entry, click the '+' button.

NHMRC accepts 10 types of publication: Accepted for Publication; Books/Chapters; Editorials; Journal Articles (Original Research); Journal Articles (Review); Letters to the Editor; Preprints;

Research Report – commissioned by Government, Industry or Other; Technical Report; and Text Book.

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, F1000 Research, etc.
- should be searchable 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 in order to preserve and make available the intellectual content of their work).

The last 10 years of publications will be included in your Synergy Grant application and provided to peer reviewers for assessment.

Applicants will be assessed based on their publications from the past 10 years as recorded in the applicant’s CV and Profile in Sapphire, see ‘My Profile’ Requirements specific to Synergy grants 2022.

Note: Any Career Disruption within ten years located in an applicant’s profile will be automatically included in the CI Profile Report. If you do not want a Career Disruption to be included in your CI Profile report you must remove it from your profile.

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

5. Application Form Requirements

The following sections of the application form are specific to Synergy Grants 2022, and must be completed as part of your application. Step-by-step instructions for entering application details in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

5.1 Creating an application

Click ‘+ New Application’ to create an application.

Grant Opportunity

Select the grant round you wish to apply for, e.g. ‘2022 Synergy Grants for funding commencing in 2023’. The application title will be used to identify the application at all times during the assessment process and needs to accurately describe the nature of the research proposal.

5.2 Primary Institution

Once an application has been started please ensure that the Primary Institution name in Sapphire – for each CI is complete and correct

From the Sapphire Home page each CI should click into 'Account Settings', 'Personal details' and click on and enter their 'Primary Institution'.

5.3 Application details

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements.

Application Identification Number (APP ID)

Each application will have its own unique Application Identification Number (Application ID), which is automatically generated by Sapphire and pre-filled in the application. Please use this Application ID number (e.g. 2345678) to identify your application when referring to it in any correspondence.

Administering Institution

Select your Administering Institution by entering three characters to start searching. There can be only one Administering Institution for each application. You must ensure that the institution you choose as your Administering Institution is the correct institution for your application. If in doubt, contact the RAO at your proposed Administering Institution.

Grant Duration

This section may contain pre-filled information that cannot be edited. If not, select the requested duration of your grant (in years) with reference to any limits specified in the Grant Guidelines.

Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander Health Research

This question enables you to identify research that specifically investigates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues. It is also designed to enable NHMRC to identify those research proposals that will require assessment of the proposed research against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

Only select 'Yes' if you can demonstrate that at least 20% of your research effort and capacity building relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

If you have answered 'Yes' to this question, you will be required to provide details of how your application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* in the application form. Your application may be assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*, using information you provide in the following text boxes; 'Community Engagement', 'Benefit', 'Sustainability and Transferability' and 'Build Capacity'.

Project Synopsis

The synopsis needs to accurately, and briefly, summarise the research proposal. This information may be used to assign applications to peer reviewers. It may also be considered in the peer review process. The synopsis section is not an opportunity to provide additional track record information.

Plain English Summary

Describe the overall aims of the research and expected outcomes in simple terms that could be understood by the general public. Avoid the use of highly technical terms. 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. The Plain English Summary is not an opportunity to provide additional track record information.

Privacy Agreement

NHMRC, as an agency subject to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), is required to notify you about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. We do so by referring you to the NHMRC Privacy Policy ([NHMRC Privacy Policy](#)). Please ensure that you have carefully read and understood the Privacy Policy prior to completing the application. If you require further clarification, please contact the NHMRC Privacy Contact Officer via email (NHMRC.Privacy@nhmrc.gov.au) or letter (NHMRC, GPO Box 1421, Canberra ACT 2601).

Have you read and understood the NHMRC Privacy Policy?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

In addition, and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 8 in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), we seek your consent to send your personal information (consisting of an "Assessor Snapshot Report") overseas, for the purposes of peer-review of this application if required. NHMRC uses the expertise of some peer assessors who reside overseas. While we take every effort to protect your personal information, assessors outside Australia are bound by their own country's laws and consequently we cannot provide assurance that your information will be handled in accordance with the same standards as required by the *Privacy Act 1988*, or that you would have similar remedies if your personal information be released in breach of local privacy laws.

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

Partner organisation consent

Do you give consent to provide your application and assessment results to other partner organisations?

Select 'Yes' or 'No'.

If you wish to be considered for funding by a partner organisation, select 'Yes'.

By selecting 'Yes' you are consenting to NHMRC providing your application and/or assessment information to potential funding partners if your application fits the funding partner's research funding objectives. For a list of funding partners, please refer to this grant opportunity's information on [GrantConnect](#).

5.4 Participating Institutions

In some cases, the institution that will administer your application may differ from the institution in which you will actually conduct the proposed research or your proposed research may be conducted at a collaborating institution in addition to your administering institution. For example, many universities administer research which will be conducted in an affiliated teaching hospital. Information, on 'Participating Institutions', is required by NHMRC to enable peer reviewers to identify potential institutional conflicts with your application and for grant administration purposes.

Research Institution

List the Participating Institution and department where the proposed research will be conducted.

To add more than one Participating Institution, press '+' and complete the required information. If the participating institution does not appear in the list, please email the institution name to the Research Help Centre (help@nhmrc.gov.au).

Research Effort (%)

If the research will be conducted at more than one institution, enter the Research Effort percentage (%) allocated to each participating institution and department. The percentages (%) entered must total 100%.

Note: If some or all of the proposed research will be carried out at your Administering Institution, create an entry with the Administering Institution and choose a percentage up to 100%. At least one institution must be listed.

5.5 Research Classification

The details entered in this section will be used in the peer review process to assist with the selection of appropriate peer reviewers for your application. It may also be used for analyses of NHMRC's Funding Profile.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. You must make the selections that best describe your research proposal against each of the following fields:

- Broad Research Area
- Field(s) of Research
- Peer Review Areas
- Research Keywords

Click '+' to add rows for each Field of Research that best describes the area of research of the application. You can select up to three Fields of Research.

5.6 Ethics

If you answer "Yes" to any of the questions, you will need to obtain ethics approvals and supply evidence of these to your research office in the event your application is funded. For further information, see *Ethics and Integrity* on the [NHMRC website](#).

5.7 Research Team

You can include a minimum of four and maximum of 10 Chief Investigators (CIs) and 10 Associate Investigators (AIs) in your research team. For further information of the eligibility requirements for CIs and AIs, please refer to section 4 *Eligibility criteria* of these Guidelines.

All fields on this page marked with a flag (🚩) must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. List all members of research team, including CIs and AIs. Complete a separate entry for each member of the team by clicking '+' to add rows.

All CIs/AIs must have a Sapphire account in order to be listed as part of the Research Team. CIs/AIs who cannot be located using the search function will need to complete registration. Submission of a registration form and activation of a Sapphire account must occur at least 72 hours prior to application close, noting that account activation processes cannot be guaranteed within this time.

Note: Click 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' to invite a Chief/Associate Investigator to complete Sapphire Registration and/or share your application with view or edit access. Enter the email address, select the corresponding access option from the dropdown menu and click 'Save and send'. Users will receive an email invitation to be assigned to the application with appropriate access rights. Click '+ Add another user' to invite any additional Investigators.

Please ensure that you have the correct email addresses for your colleagues prior to commencing your application.

Chief Investigators (CIA-CIJ)

The 'Role' and corresponding 'Name' fields for Chief Investigator A must be completed to meet minimum data requirements. If you are naming yourself for a CI/AI role, 'Invitation Response' status will automatically change to Accepted.

Indicate whether the Chief Investigator A will be based in Australia for the duration of the grant and outline their background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal.

Click '+' to add rows for additional CIs. Click the 'Role' dropdown to select a role for the CI.

To add a CI to your research team, enter their email address. If they are a registered user you can click 'Send invite'. If the user is not found, please invite them to register from the button 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' at the top. Outline the background and expertise relevant to the grant proposal for each additional Chief Investigator.

If you add a CI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by CIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added CIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

Associate Investigators (AIs)

Click '+' to Add Rows for AIs. To add an AI to your research team, enter their email address. If they are a registered user you can click 'Send invite'. If the user is not found, please invite them to register from the button 'Invite to Register & Manage Access' at the top.

'Position' is **not required for Synergy Grants**. AIs are not considered in the assessment against any of the criteria.

If you add an AI to your research team, an email will automatically be generated to the team member for their agreement to be named on the application. The invitation response status next to their name will indicate progress. Invitations must be accepted by AIs in order for applications to be submitted.

Note: Emails to added AIs will be sent after a short delay. Invitation status will not update to *Sent* until you have logged out of the application for 15 minutes.

Track Record details for CIs

Once each CI has accepted their invitation they are able to complete their individual Track Record requirements via NHMRC's Synergy Grants Track Record template. This template is available on GrantConnect. Each CI must complete this template and then provide it to their CIA/application owner for input into Sapphire. All fields on this template must be completed by each CI nominated. The Track Record criterion applies to CIs only. CIAs are advised to provide the following information to each CI to assist them in completing their NHMRC Track Record template.

The following advice should be considered by CIs when completing the Synergy Grants 2022 Track Record requirements:

The Track Record assessment comprises consideration of:

- Publications (20%)
- Research Impact (15%)
- Leadership (5%).

Publications

Each CI should nominate in the text space provided, up to five of their best publications from within the last 10 years (taking into account any Career Disruptions) and explain why these publications have been selected.

Top 5 in 10

Publication 1–5

Provide the details of up to five of your best publications in the last 10 years. Each publication should be provided separately i.e. one publication per free-text field.

- Publication 1–5 (max. 200 characters for citation including spaces and line breaks).

Note – Within the character limit, please provide sufficient citation information to locate the publication such as digital object identifier, journal name, publication title, year and authors.

Provide explanations of why these publications have been selected, outlining the quality of the publications selected and their contribution to science.

- Explanation field (max. 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks).

Applicants may include field weighted metrics and citation metrics within the explanation field for the five best publications from the last 10 years. A complete citation does not need to be provided but the publication should be easily distinguishable by including a combination of digital object identifier, journal name, publication title, year and authors.

Publications outside the last 10 years (taking into account any Career Disruptions) and other research outputs, such as patents, can be included in the Research Impact section.

Publications will be assessed against the category descriptors at *Table 2 of Appendix B*.

Research Impact

Applicants will be assessed based on:

- the reach and significance of their claimed research impact (5%)
- the contribution of their research program to the research impact (5%)
- the contribution of the applicant to the research program (5%).

Definitions used to assess Research Impact are provided in *Figure 1*.

NHMRC defines the impact of research as the verifiable outcomes that research makes to knowledge, health, the economy and/or society. Impact is the effect of the research after it has been adopted, adapted for use, or used to inform further research.

Research impact is the verifiable outcomes from research and *not the prospective or anticipated effects of the research*.

Research impact also includes research that leads to a decision not to use a particular diagnostic, treatment or health policy.

<p style="text-align: center;">Research Impact</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The verifiable outcomes that research makes to knowledge, health, the economy and/or society. Impact is the effect of the research after it has been adopted, adapted for use, or used to inform further research.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Research Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A cohesive body of research by the applicant, not limited to an individual case study (as used in a clinical context) or a single publication. It may be recent or in the past.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Research program's contribution to the research impact</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The degree to which the applicant's research program was necessary to achieve the impact(s) (knowledge, health, economic, and/or social impact).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Applicant's contribution to the research program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The level of the applicant's contribution (e.g. leadership, intellectual and/or technical input) to the research program.</p>

Figure 1: Key definitions for the assessment of Research Impact

NHMRC identifies four specific types of impact (*refer to Table 1*). Examples of evidence are listed in *Table 1*. Evidence examples may be relevant to more than one research impact type.

Table 1: Types of Research Impact and Examples of Evidence of Research Impact

Type of impact	Description of research impact	Examples of evidence (not exhaustive)
Knowledge impact	New knowledge, demonstrating the benefits emerging from adoption, adaption or use of new knowledge to inform further research, and/or understanding of what is effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of research publications (e.g. citation metrics, particularly field weighted) • data sharing • contribution to registries or biobanks • prizes and conference presentations • uptake of research tools and techniques • evidence of uptake of the research by other disciplines
Health impact	Improvements in health through new therapeutics, diagnostics, disease prevention or changes in behaviour; or improvements in disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment, management of health problems, health policy, health systems, and quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy or program adopted • a clinical guideline adopted • international or national practice standards adopted • improved service effectiveness • Phase I, Phase II and Phase III clinical trials underway or completed • improved productivity due to research innovations (e.g. reduced illness, injury) • Quality-Adjusted Life Years, Disability-Adjusted Life Years, Potential Years of Life Lost, Patient Reported Outcome Measure and other relevant indicators • relative stay index for multi-day stay patients, hospital standardised mortality ratio, cost per weighted separation and total case weighted separation • reports (including community and government)
Economic impact	Improvements in the nation's economic performance through creation of new industries, jobs or valuable products, or reducing health care costs, improving efficiency in resource use, or improving the welfare/well-being of the population within current health system resources. An economic impact may also contribute to social or health impacts, including human capital gains and the value of life and health.	<p>Health Care System Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relative stay index for multi-day stay patients, hospital standardised mortality ratio, cost per weighted separation and total case weighted separation • reduction in Medicare Benefits Schedule/Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme costs • improved productivity due to research innovations (e.g. reduced illness, injury) • improved service effectiveness <p>Product Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a research contract with an industry partner and an active collaboration • granting of a patent • execution of a licensing agreement with an established company • income from intellectual property • raising funding from venture capital or other commercial sources or from government schemes that required industry co-participation • successful exit from start-up company (public market flotation, merger or acquisition)

Type of impact	Description of research impact	Examples of evidence (not exhaustive)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of pre-good manufacturing practice prototype • successful generation or submission of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a regulatory standard data set ○ applications for pre-market approval of a medical device ○ a new drug or device for registration (e.g. by Food and Drug Administration, European Medicines Agency, Therapeutic Goods Administration) • product sales
Social impact	Improvements in the health of society, including the well-being of the end user and the community. This may include improved ability to access health care services, to participate socially (including empowerment and participation in decision making) and to quantify improvements in the health of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uptake or demonstrated use of evidence by decision makers/policy makers • qualitative measures demonstrating changes in behaviours, attitudes, improved social equity, inclusion or cohesion • improved environmental determinants of health • improved social determinants of health • changes to health risk factors

For each CI, indicate which of the research impact types you would like to be considered in the assessment of your application (select one or more).

How to demonstrate Research Impact (per CI)

Applicants should only include **one research program** to demonstrate research impact(s) across **one or more of the four types of impact**. Applicants will be asked to indicate in the Synergy Grant Track Record template which of the research impact types they would like considered in the assessment of their application. If the research program can be used to demonstrate multiple impacts, the overall research impact score is determined holistically and on balance across the four types (it is not additive). This means that an applicant with one type of impact can score as well as or better than an applicant with multiple types of impact.

A research program is a cohesive body of research by the applicant, as opposed to disparate bodies of research that each have different objectives and impacts. Applicants are required to provide evidence that is sufficient and strong enough to demonstrate their claims for all three impact criteria. Applicants may use the same evidence across the three impact criteria if appropriate. Peer reviewers will decide based on the evidence provided whether the impact claims have been sufficiently demonstrated and corroborated. A poorly corroborated or non-corroborated research impact or contribution to impact will receive a score of one, in alignment with the category descriptors.

For applicants who have provided impacts for more than one research program, peer reviewers determine whether any one of the research programs and their impacts have been sufficiently demonstrated and corroborated, and score accordingly. Applicants are not scored in an additive method for multiple research programs.

Whilst it is expected that the research impact is recent, the research program that contributed to the research impact may be from any time in a researcher's career—there are no time limits on when a researcher made a contribution to the research program or when the research program contributed to the research impact.

Applicants should note that there is no requirement for their research impact to align with the research proposal/vision in their application—these are assessed independently against separate assessment criteria and category descriptors.

The assessment of Research Impact will be against the category descriptors at **Tables 3, 4 and 5** in *Appendix B* of the Synergy Grants 2022 Guidelines.

Applicants should provide robust, verifiable evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative, see **Table 3**) to support the claimed research impact that can be independently assessed by peer reviewers.

Applicants should provide their best example of the impact within the field limit. Any references that are required as verifiable evidence of the impact need not be provided as a complete citation. References to publications within the available entry fields do not need to be provided as a complete citation. For example, it would be sufficient to note a combination of the digital object identifier, journal name, publication title, year and authors.

Applicants should note that it is the quality of the corroborating evidence provided, not the quantity. Applicants only need to provide evidence sufficient and strong enough to verify the claims, not all evidence that may be on the public record.

An applicant who does not wish to provide research impact evidence because it is not in the public domain, or because it is commercially sensitive, may describe the evidence within their application, noting that it is commercially sensitive, without making it available. Any such evidence should be provided to RAOs who should ensure that such evidence is retained by their office to be made available to NHMRC, if requested.

In considering whether to provide such evidence, applicants should note that all NHMRC peer reviewers enter into a Deed of Confidentiality prior to the commencement of the peer review process which prohibits the discussion of applications or disclosure of any information contained therein, outside of their appointment as a peer reviewer. In addition, NHMRC staff are required under the APS Code of Conduct to observe rigorous confidentiality in relation to their day-to-day work.

Reach and significance of the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence

Describe the reach and significance of the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence (maximum of 3000 characters including spaces and line breaks).

Reach is the extent, spread, breadth and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, relative to the type of research impact.

Significance is the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance of policies, practices, products, services, culture, understanding, awareness or well-being of the beneficiaries (not the prevalence or magnitude of the issue).

Corroborating evidence is outlining the corroborating evidence for the reach and significance of the research program

Research program's contribution to the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence

Outline how the research program contributed to the research impact, supported by corroborating evidence (maximum of 3000 characters including spaces and line breaks).

A *research program* is a cohesive body of research by the applicant. It is not limited to an individual case study (as used in a clinical context) or a single publication. A research program may be recent or in the past. Applicants need to outline the research program with corroborating evidence that can be independently assessed by peer reviewers.

Research program's contribution to the research impact is the degree to which the applicant's research program was necessary to achieve the impact(s) (knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact) based on robust and verifiable evidence. The relationship between the applicant's research program (including related activities) and the impact may be foreseen or unforeseen, and may be an end-product or demonstrated during the research process. Research impact examples may include the adoption or adaptation of existing research.

Corroborating evidence is outlining the corroborating evidence for how the research program contributed to the research impact.

Applicant's contribution to the research program, supported by corroborating evidence

Outline your contribution to the research program, supported by corroborating evidence (maximum of 3000 characters including spaces and line breaks).

An *applicant's contribution to the research program* is, relative to opportunity and to the applicant's field of research, the level of the applicant's contribution (e.g. leadership, intellectual and/or technical input) to the research program based on robust and verifiable evidence.

Corroborating evidence is outlining the corroborating evidence for your contribution to the research program.

Leadership

For the assessment of leadership, each CI is required to outline their outputs over the past 10 years (taking into account Career Disruptions and relative to opportunity) across each of the four Leadership elements:

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

The assessment of Leadership will be against the category descriptors at **Table 6** in *Appendix B* of the Synergy Grants 2022 Guidelines.

Address each of the leadership elements in the fields provided (maximum of 2000 characters including spaces and line breaks per field).

5.8 Track Record

CI Track Record Template input

Click on the Research Team section of the application form and then click on the Chief Investigator you are inputting the Track Record information for. Enter information as it appears for PhD and Level 10 criteria responses.

Select the Research Impact checkboxes as identified by the CI. Copy and paste all information for Publications, Research impact, and Leadership into the appropriate fields.

Note: It is recommended that the CIA or Application Owner co-ordinates with each CI to arrange view access for each CI, to confirm Track Record input is correct prior to application submission.

5.9 Grant Proposal

Knowledge Gain (30%) and Synergy (30%)

Knowledge Gain

NHMRC defines Knowledge Gain for the Synergy Grant scheme as the quality of the proposed research and significance of the knowledge gained. It incorporates theoretical concepts, hypotheses, research design, robustness and the extent to which the research findings will contribute to the research area and health outcomes (by advancing knowledge, practice or policy).

Synergy

The Synergy criterion will consider the quality of the diverse team's multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to solving a major health and medical research question, as well as the capacity-building/workforce development outcomes.

This criterion will also assess whether the specific research team named in your application has the appropriate mix of research skills and collaborative experience to answer the research question.

Successful Synergy Grant proposals will be outcomes focused, demonstrating the skills essential to solve the research question, and provide evidence of a discernible benefit over homogenous research teams.

Applicants must not include in any part of their application:

- Links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online; where links are included, provide the URL in full (e.g. the NHMRC website <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au>). Applicants are asked not to use URL shorteners as this may create a security risk.
- Publication metrics such as Journal Impact Factors, consistent with the recommendations in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.

The grant proposal must be written in English and submitted in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, using NHMRC's Grant Proposal template, which will be available on GrantConnect. Applicants must use this template. The grant proposal must be uploaded into Sapphire.

Grant Proposal (Upload)

To upload your Grant Proposal PDF, select the 'Upload New' button followed by the 'Choose File' button. Select the PDF file you wish to upload and then click 'Start upload' to upload your Grant Proposal. Click 'Save' to ensure the application is submitted correctly.

To ensure that the document is displaying properly, applicants need to open a copy of the uploaded document by selecting the open icon to the right of the document name after the document has been saved in Sapphire.

Naming and formatting requirements for the grant proposal, to ensure fairness and consistency across applicants, are listed in *Table 1*. Applications that fail to comply with these requirements may be excluded from consideration.

Details to be addressed in the grant proposal and associated page limits are set out in *Table 2*. Applicants should note that peer reviewers will, as part of their assessment, consider the reproducibility and applicability of the proposed research and research design. Within the experimental design of the proposal, applicants need to include sufficient information to demonstrate that robust and unbiased results will be produced.

Table 1: Formatting Requirements

Component	Component Requirements
File format	The grant proposal must be saved and uploaded as a PDF file
File size	The PDF file MUST NOT exceed 2MB in size
File name	The PDF file must be named using the following: Applicant's Surname_Document Type/Name.pdf e.g.: Smith_Grant Proposal.pdf
Page size	A4
Header	Application ID and Applicant surname must be included in the header
Footer	Page number must be included in the footer
Font	NHMRC recommends a minimum of 12 point Times New Roman font. Applicants must ensure the font is readable.
Line spacing	Single
Language	English

Table 2: Grant Proposal Components

Component	Page Limit
Research Proposal – response to the Knowledge Gain criterion	8 pages
References	2 pages
Response to Synergy criterion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diversity (1–3 pages) ▪ Multidisciplinarity (1–3 pages) ▪ Collaborative Gain (1–3 pages) 	9 pages

A brief description of each component is provided below.

Research Proposal – 8 pages

The research proposal must address the essential components of your research and can include the following properties depending on the type of research:

Component	Properties
Aims	Describe the specific aims of the project, including a clear statement of hypotheses to be tested.
Background	Provide a rationale for the project.
Research Plan – methods and techniques to be used	<p>When drafting the response to the Knowledge Gain criterion applicant teams should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the applicant team’s research strategy for the next five yearsOutline the proposed research objectives, basic methodologies and expected outcomesDescribe the importance of the problem to be researched, the planned outcome of the research plan, and the potential significance of the research. <p>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).</p>
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.

References cited in this document are to be listed in the separate References section.

References – 2 pages

References for the Research Proposal must:

- not exceed two pages
- provide a list of all references cited in the application in an appropriate standard journal format (NHMRC prefers the Author-date (also known as the Harvard System), Documentary-note and the Vancouver Systems)
- list authors in the order in which they appear in PubMed
- only include references to cited work
- must be written in English.

Assessment Criteria response to Synergy criterion – up to 9 pages

Synergy is assessed for CIs against the category descriptors provided at **Table 1** in [Appendix B](#) of the *Synergy Grants 2022 Guidelines*. Note that AIs are **not** considered for this criterion.

Diversity (1–3 pages)

For the purposes of Synergy Grants, diversity includes gender, cultural backgrounds, skills, expertise and career stages. NHMRC recognises the need to foster diversity in health and medical research teams beyond multidisciplinary.

Health and medical research, from basic science to clinical and translational research, and policy formation, requires creativity and a diverse range of skillsets and viewpoints.

Applicants should justify the diversity within the proposed team of CIs by outlining:

- the type(s) of diversity fostered and how it will enhance the outcomes of the research and its scientific quality, including why the research question cannot be addressed without the proposed personnel
- how the CI team will contribute to the capacity building, mentoring, career development and diversification of the research workforce.

Multidisciplinary (1–3 pages)

For the purposes of Synergy Grants, “multidisciplinary research” covers research by teams that integrate information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, methodologies and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve questions whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.

As part of the Research Proposal, applicants will have identified a major health and medical research related question. To address the multidisciplinary approach of the Synergy criterion, the response must demonstrate:

- why the research question requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge
- how the multiple disciplinary approach can provide novel solutions and insights that would not be achieved with a single discipline or traditional approaches
- how this combination of Chief Investigators, with their past experience and disciplines, will enhance the outcomes of the research and its scientific quality by working as a team, including why the research question cannot be addressed without the proposed personnel
- how the research question is operationalised and addressed using different disciplines complementarily.

Collaborative Gain (1–3 pages)

Synergy Grant research teams will foster both collaborative gain and capacity building through the recruitment of talented researchers from diverse backgrounds and groups. Collaborative gain reflects the ability to achieve goals that could otherwise not be achieved by the CI team pursuing components as separate projects.

The response should describe:

- the methods that will keep the team focused, integrated and cohesive and that will drive outcomes, e.g.:

- how performance will be monitored
- how milestones will be evaluated
- how the grant funds and other resources will be shared, deployed, and redeployed if required
- strategies for the sustainability of the research collaboration and scope for long term outcomes extending beyond the life of the project
- how the strategy will support intellectual exchange during and beyond the life of the research project
- how each investigator has previously demonstrated experience and success in collaborative research (with the same or other collaborators)
- what mentoring, professional and personal development opportunities will be provided and how they will help increase capability of under-represented groups and researchers.

5.10 Strategic Priorities and Funding Partners

Applicants may also receive funding from a partner organisation. Refer to *Appendix A* in the Guidelines and the [GrantConnect](#) website for information on the partner organisations and any specific application requirements.

Funding Organisation

Indicate by selecting 'Yes' the funding organisation(s) you would like to consider your application.

6. Certifying your application

Once all 'My Profile' details, application form details and supporting documents have been entered/uploaded, the application can be certified and submitted in Sapphire. Certification is required of both the CIA and Administering Institution. Refer to section *7.7 Certification and Submission* of the Guidelines for further details.

Before completing these steps:

- Review the application to ensure it is accurate and complete and meets all eligibility/application requirements. The following tools are available to assist applicants in checking their applications:
 - Applicants retain responsibility for confirming that their application satisfies the stated eligibility requirements.
 - For funding schemes where the applicant has nominated a research budget, the summary tab automatically generates a summary of the requested budget from the relevant sections.
 - A checklist for applicants applying for NHMRC funding is provided at section 7 of this Appendix of this document.

- Ensure you have read and understood the assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings required of CIAs and Administering Institutions as part of this step. These are outlined in section 7.7 *Certification and Submission* of these Guidelines.
- Note that certification will lock down the application and prevent further editing. The final snapshot produced at this time will include relevant information from your 'My Profile' any subsequent changes to these areas of Sapphire will not appear in the application. If changes are needed after CIA certification but before submission to NHMRC, your RAO will need to reject the application in order for you to make the changes.
- Note that your personal information may be provided to another Administering Institution for the purpose of certifying the application where a researcher is either currently receiving NHMRC funding or is on a different and separate application for NHMRC funding.

Instructions for certifying and submitting an application in Sapphire are provided in the [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).

Once submitted to NHMRC, your application will be considered final and no changes can be made unless the application is withdrawn for amendment prior to the closing date.

7. Checklist for applicants

Before creating an application:

- Ensure Sapphire Accounts for all CIs are active and mandatory 'My Profile' fields are complete (indicated by a red asterisk *).
- Familiarise yourself with the Guidelines and [Sapphire Learning and Training Resources](#).
- Check application lodgement close date and time.
- Update your Sapphire 'My Profile' in accordance with requirements set out in this document.
- Read the relevant ethical guidelines/associated documentation if ethics approval is required for the proposed application.
- Inform your RAO of your intention to submit an application.
- Be aware of any Administering Institution internal deadlines and requirements for submission.

During the creation of an application:

- Check any minimum data requirements.
- Check eligibility requirements.
- Complete all parts of the application.
- Create and upload your Grant Proposal.
- Identify any relative to opportunity considerations, including career disruptions, where applicable, within your application.

- Consider any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander requirements your application has, including addressing any additional selection criteria.
- Make sure all required attachments are uploaded.

Before submitting an application:

- Read and understand the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#). Submission of an application indicates that the Administering Institution and research team understand and will comply with the principles and responsibilities set out in the Code.
- Check your compliance with formatting and page requirements.
- Ensure any Approvals or licences are acquired or applied for.
- Check all information is correct and complete.
- Familiarise yourself with your obligations should you be successful.
- Certify the application and ensure RAO certification and submission occurs before the close date and time.

Remember, your RAO is your primary contact for advice and assistance. RAOs will contact the Research Help Centre for further advice if required.

Appendix D. NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy

Purpose

NHMRC's goal is to support the highest quality research that will lead to improvements in health over the short or long term. Peer review by independent experts is used to identify well-designed feasible projects that address a significant question and are undertaken by researchers with demonstrated capacity to perform high quality research.

In most NHMRC grant schemes, peer reviewers are asked to assess the track record of the applicants as well as the proposed research. However, NHMRC recognises that not all research careers are the same and therefore peer reviewers are asked to assess track records "relative to opportunity", taking into account circumstances that have affected the applicant's research productivity.

The purpose of this document is to outline NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity Policy with respect to:

- peer review of applicant track records
- eligibility to apply for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants.

Policy Approach

NHMRC considers Relative to Opportunity to mean that peer reviewers should assess an applicant's track record of research productivity and professional contribution in the context of their career stage and circumstances, by taking into consideration whether the applicant's productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to them.

The policy has two components:

- Career Disruption – a prolonged interruption to the ability to work due to pregnancy, illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities. Career Disruptions are taken into account in track record assessment and in determining an applicant's eligibility to hold an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant (in terms of years since they received their PhD).
- Other Relative to Opportunity considerations – any other personal or professional circumstances affecting research productivity. These circumstances are taken into account in track record assessment.

In addition to *NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review*, particularly fairness and transparency, the following principles support this objective:

- **Research opportunity:** Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct.

- **Fair access:** Researchers should have access to funding support available through NHMRC grant program consistent with their experience and career stage.
- **Career diversity:** Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside academia should not be disadvantaged. NHMRC recognises that time spent in sectors, such as industry, may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

NHMRC expects that peer reviewers will give clear and explicit attention to these principles to identify the highest quality research and researchers. NHMRC recognises that life circumstances can be varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review.

can be varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review.

Consideration of career circumstances during peer review of grant applications

Under the Relative to Opportunity policy, researchers' career circumstances are considered during track record assessment. This aims to take into account salient research opportunity considerations over the course of a research career and is not intended to address minor changes to life circumstances.

Circumstances considered during peer review include, but are not limited to:

Research

- research role(s) and responsibilities, career stage, and amount of time spent as an active researcher

Resources and facilities

- available resources and facilities, including:
 - the extent to which any additional research personnel and/or collaborators contribute to the applicant's research program
 - situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities.

Personal circumstances

- disability (including mental health conditions and psychosocial disability) or illness
- caring responsibilities that do not interrupt the applicant's career for an extended period (that would meet the definition of a Career Disruption) but still affect research productivity.
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including 'sorry business'
- any other personal circumstances

Other circumstances

- relocation of an applicant and their research laboratory or clinical practice setting
- periods of unemployment
- calamities, such as pandemics, bushfires or cyclones

Relative to Opportunity considerations do not include:

- minor (or short-term) changes that occur during the normal course of conducting research, e.g. broken equipment or delayed ethics approval
- minor (or short-term) medical conditions
- recreational leave or general administrative activities related to research, such as preparation of grant applications and publications or committee-related activities.

Consideration of Career Disruption during peer review and in determining eligibility for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants

A Career Disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

The period of Career Disruption may be used:

- to determine an applicant's eligibility for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant
- to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application
- for consideration of track record relative to opportunity by peer reviewers.

A period of Career Disruption is defined as:

- a continuous absence from work for 90 calendar days or more, and/or
- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined %FTE) due to circumstances classified as Career Disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more¹.

In determining eligibility of Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant applicants, the 10-year limit on the number of years post-PhD may be extended commensurate with the period of the Career Disruption.

NOTE: For the purposes of peer review, circumstances not meeting the definition of Career Disruption may be considered under the career circumstances provisions above

¹For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 450 calendar days to achieve a Career Disruption of 90 calendar days.

Appendix E. Eligibility for Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes (2022 funding round)

No grants held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants

	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants

1 Project Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	1x Ideas Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (75% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (75% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	2x Ideas Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	1x Investigator Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	1x Synergy Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants

	<p><i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>

2 or more Project Grants held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	1x Ideas Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	2x Ideas Grants	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	1x Investigator Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	1x Synergy Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant

	<p><i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i></p>	<p>Combination not allowed and/or possible</p>

1 Program Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

1 Program Grant and 1 Project Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

NHMRC Fellowship (not in penultimate or final year) held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants

NHMRC Fellowship (in penultimate or final year) held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
		Grants held on January 1, 2023
	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant*, OR • 1x Investigator Grant* + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant* + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant*, OR • 1x Investigator Grant* + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants
	<p><i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>

NHMRC Fellowship (not in penultimate or final year) and 1x Project Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants

NHMRC Fellowship (in penultimate or final year) and 1x Project Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (75% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (75% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (25% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 2x Ideas Grants

	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants

NHMRC Fellowship (not in penultimate or final year) and 2 or more Project Grants held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

NHMRC Fellowship (in penultimate or final year) and 2 or more Project Grants held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant, OR • 1x Ideas Grant + 1x Synergy Grant, OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (100% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Synergy Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP), OR • 1x Investigator Grant* (50% reduction to RSP) + 1x Ideas Grant (If you apply for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant in the same round and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be awarded), OR • 1x Ideas Grant
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants

	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i></p>	<p>Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants</p>
	<p><i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i></p>	<p>Combination not allowed and/or possible</p>

NHMRC Fellowship (not in penultimate or final year) and 1x Program Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

NHMRC Fellowship (in penultimate or final year) and 1x Program Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

NHMRC Fellowship (not in penultimate or final year), 1x Project Grant and 1x Program Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

NHMRC Fellowship (in penultimate or final year), 1x Project Grant and 1x Program Grant held under the old grant program

		Grants eligible to apply for in the 2022 funding round (for funding 2023)
Grants held on January 1, 2023	<i>No Investigator, Ideas or Synergy grants held</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x Investigator Grant (100% reduction to RSP)
	<i>1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant</i>	Not eligible to apply for any Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grants
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Investigator Grant and 1x Synergy Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 1x Ideas Grant</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible
	<i>1x Synergy Grant and 2x Ideas Grants</i>	Combination not allowed and/or possible

* If the first year of the Investigator Grant overlaps with the final year of a NHMRC fellowship, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid during the overlap (i.e. the period that both grants are held). During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the NHMRC fellowship and the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly.

Appendix F. Concept of Synergy

Preamble

The Synergy Grant scheme incorporates an assessment criterion on “Synergy” that will assess the merits of an applicant team’s multidisciplinary approach, the diversity of the research team and its “collaborative gain”. With respect to multidisciplinary and diversity, only the CIs of the proposed research team will be assessed; the AIs are not considered for this criterion.

The criterion will consider the quality of the diverse team’s multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to solving a major health and medical research question, as well as the capacity-building/workforce development outcomes.

Successful Synergy Grant proposals will have an outcomes focus, demonstrating the skills essential to solve the research question, and will provide evidence of a discernible benefit over “homogenous” research teams (through multidisciplinary and diversity).

A multiple disciplinary approach to research

Solving major research questions and achieving transformative health outcomes increasingly require new technical and intellectual approaches (new ways to think about and/or address a question) through a convergence of perspectives from different disciplines. Each discipline provides specific intellectual knowledge, experimental approaches, methodological considerations, analytical approaches, and theoretical context. Together, these elements provide new insights to address major and challenging research questions.

In addition to integration between the broad research areas of basic science, clinical medicine and science, public health and health services research, a multidisciplinary approach may involve single or multiple methods (i.e. qualitative, quantitative, multimethods and mixed methods) across a range of research disciplines including, for example, social sciences, policy analysis, economics, engineering, mathematics and physical sciences. Such approaches may be critical to address major questions in health care delivery, health systems strengthening or population health.

The concept of research involving multiple disciplines is often denoted by terms such as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. However, the definition of these terms, and even the concept of a “discipline”, is constantly evolving and lacks consensus across different areas of health and medical research.

For the purposes of Synergy Grants, “multiple disciplinary research” covers *‘research by teams that integrate information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, methodologies and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve questions whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice’*.

Applicants should identify a major health and medical research related question and justify:

- why it requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge
- how the multiple disciplinary approach can provide novel solutions and insights that would not be achieved with a single discipline or traditional approaches

- how the research question is operationalised and addressed using different disciplines complementarily
- the sustainability of the research collaboration and scope for long term outcomes extending beyond the life of the project
- the methods that will keep the multiple disciplinary team of CIs focused, integrated and cohesive and that will drive outcomes.

Diversity of research teams

NHMRC recognises the need to foster diversity in health and medical research teams beyond multiple disciplinarity.

Health and medical research, from basic science to clinical and translational research, and policy formation, requires creativity and a range of skillsets and viewpoints.

Synergy Grant research teams will foster both collaborative gain and capacity building through the recruitment of talented researchers from diverse backgrounds and groups.

Diversity in Synergy Grants could span under-represented groups in health and medical research. This could include career stage, gender and researchers from different cultures (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers). Given the broad spectrum of research encompassed in the health and medical research sector, the opportunities to engage a particular group will depend on the type of research being undertaken. It is, however, essential that each of the CIs contributes to the scientific development and execution of the project in a substantive and measurable manner.

In addition to diversity in the research team, NHMRC strongly encourages and values collaborations with stakeholders who have direct experience and knowledge, or who are direct beneficiaries, of the proposed research. This could include consumers, community groups, policy makers and people from different cultures (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). The active involvement of these stakeholders will enhance research priority setting, increase the relevance of the research and its translation and provide critical knowledge that increases the quality and direction of the research.

Diversity is a broad concept with different dimensions and approaches across the health and medical research sector. Each of the different dimensions is important and diversity should be embraced in its broadest sense. Rather than mandate a particular approach to achieving diversity or ascribe a hierarchy of importance (e.g. gender versus career stage), NHMRC requires applicants to establish and demonstrate diversity in research teams that is aligned to the major research question of the proposal. The inclusion of a particular team member should be considered in the context of the research question, by valuing and engaging diverse personnel to enhance a project's quality and outcomes and advancing workforce development/capacity.

Applicants should justify the diversity within the CIs of the proposed research team by outlining:

- the type(s) of diversity fostered and how it will enhance the outcomes of the project and its scientific quality, including why the research question cannot be addressed without the proposed personnel, and
- how the team of CIs will contribute to the capacity building, mentoring, career development and diversification of the research workforce.

Examples of multiple disciplinary research teams are outlined below to illustrate the concepts in the context of Synergy Grants. These examples are not indicative of the potential merit of an application.

Synergy Grant applications will be assessed against published assessment criteria based on the specific details of each proposal. Applicants should refer to the Category Descriptors, which identify the expectations for each score across a seven point scale.

Examples

- The development of genomics formed from genetics, molecular biology, analytical chemistry, mathematics and informatics. Genomics is now being integrated with public health research for health improvement through guidelines for appropriate use of genetic tests and services, interventions such as newborn screening for conditions and multidisciplinary population sciences to assess value and impact of genetic information in health conditions.
- The development of cancer-screening tools undertaken by teams including clinicians, research nurses, geneticists, bioinformaticians, biochemists etc. Together, these researchers identify a suitable patient cohort, obtain clinical samples, identify likely biomarkers that correlate with tumour development using genetics, define the role of that gene/protein in the development of cancer and undertake subsequent development of diagnostic tests for screening in patient cohorts.
- Research into the assessment and management of cardiovascular risk to develop new approaches to individualised absolute risk assessment and management. This may require a research team that includes public health researchers with qualitative and quantitative skills, clinicians with a range of expertise across the lifecycle and continuum from hospital to community care, geneticists, behavioural, biomedical engineering and informatics scientists, dietitians and exercise scientists and health consumers (especially from vulnerable population groups).
- Research to identify new approaches to manage antibiotic resistance could incorporate researchers from biology and biochemistry, immunology, biomedicine and pharmacology. Such a team could work with mathematicians and statisticians to develop new antibiotics, as well as with behavioural scientists and economists to understand how patterns of resistance develop and develop new behavioural strategies to reduce antibiotic use or to provide incentives for appropriate use of new antibiotics.