2019 Project Grant Application Guidelines

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The Rebecca L. Cooper Medical Research Foundation ("*The Foundation*") invites applications from Early-Career Researchers for Project Grants designed to enable recipients of the award to take ownership of a discreet research project and to provide a stepping stone towards independence.

Funding

The award provides $50,000 per year for two years, commencing in 2019, for Direct Costs of Research*.

Funding may not be used towards:

- Employment-related expenses for the recipient; or
- Institutional infrastructure levies including the normal overhead and operating expenses of the Institution.

*The Foundation adopts the NHMRC's Direct Costs of Research Principles. Examples of acceptable uses of funding under this policy include purchase of equipment and consumables; medical diagnosis costs such as (e.g. MRI, genotyping, biochemical analysis); specialised computing required to meet the project needs; and employment of a research assistant engaged on a short- term contract.

Application Dates

Applications open **1 August 2018** and close at **5pm AEST, 31 August 2018.**

Late applications will not be accepted. Difficulties using the Online Application Portal are not considered a valid reason for late submission, so plan to submit your application ahead of the deadline so that any issues that may arise during the application process may be resolved.

Project Eligibility

Proposals must be for a stand-alone project that can be entirely funded by the award. Projects within in the areas of basic science, applied research and translational research are considered equally. The proposed research must be carried out in Australia and aim to improve our understanding of a disease/condition in one the following areas of medical research:

1. Brain Sciences: Psychiatry or Neurology (excluding Dementias)
2. Endocrinology (excluding Diabetes)
3. Geriatrics (excluding Dementias)
4. Lung Disease (other than Cancer)
5. Rheumatology
6. Vision Sciences
7. Dermatology (excluding skin cancer)

Please note that research projects on public health matters are not eligible for funding.

Applicant Eligibility

To apply, you must:

- be a qualified MD or have a PhD in medicine related field of science (a MBBS or Masters degrees alone will not be recognised);
- have received formal notification of passing your PhD/MD on or after 1 January 2008 and before or on 31 December 2012, unless career disruptions exist. (NB, the date of degree conferral is not to be used);
- be employed by or affiliated with a credentialed Australian Research Institution;
- carry out the research activities described in the application within Australia;
- work within one of the nominated areas of medical research supported by the Foundation;
- **not** have attained the title of Associate Professor or higher;
- **not** have received a NHMRC Research Fellowship, or Practitioner Fellowship;
- **not** be the CIA or PI on a Federally Funded grant (includes current or completed grants awarded within Australian and internationally that are equivalent to an NHMRC project grant);
- **not** have received a Project Grant ($50,000p.a. for a two-year period) from the Foundation; and
- **not** have received the Al & Val Rosenstrauss Fellowship from the Foundation.

Please note:

- Applications from researchers working on a part-time basis are accepted on the assumption that this will not impact on the successful completion of the proposed project.
- NHMRC Career Development Fellows, Early-Career Fellows and ARC DECRA recipients are permitted to apply.
- Applicants must not submit more than one application per year.
- You may apply for a Project Grant if at the time of application you have applied for a federally funded grant where the outcome of that application is still pending. If your application for a federally funded grant is subsequently successful, the Foundation must be notified in writing.


How to Apply

You must complete a two-stage application process. Stage One requires you to complete an Online Application Form. Stage Two requires the nominated Research Administration Officer ("*RAO*") of the Administering Institution to provide approval of the submission and agreement to the Foundation's Terms and Conditions. Please ensure you leave sufficient time to complete the two-stage application process by the application deadline.

Login to the Application Portal

Create a user profile for the Online Application Portal if you do not have an existing user account.

Complete the Application Form

Once logged in to your user account, select "Apply for Project Grant" and complete the five-step Application Form by following the prompts. Should you wish to complete the application form in multiple sittings, you may save your submission as a draft and return to edit it at a later date.
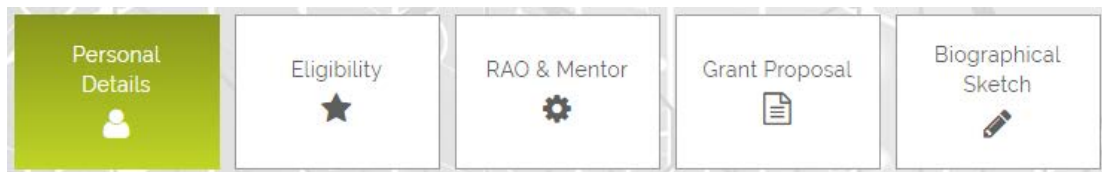
Submit your Application for RAO Approval

Prior to submitting the Application Form for RAO Approval, you are required you to confirm that:

1. the information in your application is accurate;
2. you agree to the terms and conditions published on the Foundation's website; and
3. you agree to the adhere to the requirement specified in these Application Guidelines.

Once your application has been submitted for RAO Approval, you will see it listed in your Submitted Applications with the status "pending RAO approval". If this item does not appear in your Submitted Applications list, this would indicate that the Application was not successfully submitted for approval. For such an issue to be addressed by the Foundation, it must be notified by email before the closing of applications.

RAO Approval

The RAO listed on your application will receive an email requesting agreement to your application and the terms and conditions published on the Foundation's website.

If the RAO agrees, your application is finalised and you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.

If the RAO does not agree, your application will be declined and you will be sent an email advising that your application has not been approved by the RAO.

If you do not receive either of these two emails, this would indicate that the RAO has not actioned the approval step. For such an issue to be addressed by the Foundation, it must be notified by email before the closing of applications.

Grant Proposal

Step four of the Application Form requires you to prepare a Grant Proposal in accordance with the requirements outlined below.

Proposal content

Your proposal should have the following headings in bold which address the desired criteria:

1. Background
   a. Any preliminary data that has led to the present proposal.
   b. Why the requested funding is important for your research.
2. Research Proposal
   a. The experimental design and specific aims of your project.
   b. Your research timeline.

3. Significance and Outcomes
    a. Predicted outcomes.
    b. How your research will benefit the world we live in.
4. Salary Costs
    a. Details of how your salary costs will be covered for the two-year funding period.

Do not include a reference list, appendices, or quotes for the cost of acquisition of any items included in the proposal.

As applications may be reviewed by the Board of the Foundation it would be advisable to write your proposal in language that is understandable to an informed reader who may not have an in-depth knowledge of your area of research or research methodologies. This does not mean that the content should be oversimplified to the point where details of the rigour of the research methodology are lost.

Inclusion of Figures

You may include a maximum of one figure in your grant proposal. The figure may contain tabulated information, images and diagrams and must be submitted as a jpg, jpeg, png or gif file. The figure size must comply with one of the three options below:

1. Small figure (230 x 331 pixels, width x height)
2. Medium figure (431 x 280 pixels, width x height)
3. Large figure (639 x 241 pixels, width x height)

Please refer to the Appendix for a sample of each image size.

Information included as an image must be legible. The experience of the Foundation is that if the information in the figure is judged unreadable by the Scientific Advisory Committee ("*SAC*"), this will severely affect the likelihood of the proposal being judged competitive for funding. Please be aware that colour and definition may be lost if the image is printed.

Proposal Length (character limit)

The character limit for your grant proposal is as follows and will vary according to the size of the figure you choose to include:

- No figure – 8400 characters, including spaces.
- With small figure – 7400 characters, including spaces
- With medium figure – 7100 characters, including spaces
- With large figure – 6730 characters, including spaces

Biographical Sketch

Step five of the Application Form requires you to provide:

1. a list of your positions and honours held in the past five years, beginning with current;
2. a list of your education and training beginning with baccalaureate or other initial professional education (include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable);

3. a Personal Statement briefly describing why your experience and qualifications make you particularly well-suited for your role in the project that is the subject of the application (max. 1200 characters, including spaces);

4. a brief bibliography summarising how many papers you have published; how often they have been cited and your H-index. Provide a brief summary of your top five publications giving the number of times each publication has been cited and the impact factor and rank in field of the Journal in which each paper is published. A link to your Google Scholar page, if public, could be included. (max. 1200 characters, including spaces);

5. details of current grant funding and research support;

6. details of your proposed mentor and brief details of their expertise (max. 300 characters, including spaces); and

7. a letter of support from your nominated mentor in PDF format.

Claims of Career Disruption

Should you wish to submit a Claim of Career Disruption, you must complete the relevant subsection in step two of the Application Form. You will be asked to provide:

1. A Statement of Impact briefly describing the impact of interruption(s) on your research output/productivity (max. 900 characters including spaces).

2. Details of each interruption:
   a. Disruption Type (pregnancy, major illness/injury, carer's responsibilities).
   b. Full Time Equivalent ("*FTE*") worked during the interruption period.
   c. Commencement and end dates of the disruption period.
   d. Brief disruption details.
   e. Supporting evidence in PDF format. Only medical certificates and letters from your employer summarising the duration, % FTE and type of leave taken, will be accepted as evidence.

How is this information used?
- Your Statement of Impact will be shared with reviewers and considered in the review of your track record.
- Claims of Career Disruption will be used to determine eligibility for the scheme for applicants who passed their PhD/MD on or after 1 January 2005 and before or on 31 December 2007, and who would otherwise not be eligible to apply.

Eligible Disruptions
The Foundation uses the NHMRC's definition of Career Disruptions which are prolonged interruptions to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities.

Claimed interruptions must:
1. involve either a continuous absence from work for periods of more than 27 calendar days and/or a long-term partial return to work that has been formalised with the applicant's employer.
2. **not** exceed a total three years; and

Claims for Career Disruption will be reviewed by the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Executive Officer of the Foundation. If these claims are judged invalid, the applicant will be informed and the application disqualified.

Application Review and Award

Applications are reviewed by three members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) who have expertise in the field of research in which the application is submitted. Funding decisions are made by the Foundation's directors at a meeting to be held in December of the application year.

Applications are assessed with respect to three weighted criteria:

1. **Significance and/or Innovation (40%)** – Assesses the impact of the proposed research on knowledge or treatment approaches in the nominated field of research; and/or how innovative the research is in concept or approach.
2. **Feasibility (40%)** – Assesses the likelihood that the applicant will achieve what they are setting out to do and will depend on:
   - the research design
   - the applicant's capabilities and experience
   - selection of a mentor with appropriate capabilities and experience to help the researcher achieve success
3. **Track Record (20%)** – Assesses the applicant's experience, knowledge, achievements and productivity to date, with respect to its relevance for the proposed research.

Application Outcomes and Award Acceptance

An outcome notification will be emailed to you and your nominated RAO in February of the funding year.

Feedback is not provided to applicants and the Foundation will not enter into discussions concerning the outcome of individual applications.

Should you be successful in your application, you will be required to complete a Grant Acceptance Form that may be accessed via the Online Application Portal .

Applicants who **accept** the award:

- are automatically included in the Foundation's reviewer pool and may be called upon to participate on future Scientific Advisory Committees; and
- may not apply for future rounds of the Project Grant scheme.

Terms and Conditions of Award

Any breach of these Application Guidelines or the Terms and Conditions published on the Foundation's website will result in automatic disqualification for the award.

Grant Payment

The award will be paid in two instalments of $50,000 (exclusive GST) on 1 April of each funding year. GST is not payable on the grant.

Grants are paid by EFT to the Administering Institution listed in the grant application for the use proposed by the applicant. The grant is awarded on the condition that infrastructure levies are not deducted by the Administering Institution.

If the grant recipient moves to another institution, authorisation from the Foundation must be sought for a transfer of funds to the new institution.

Grant Acquittal

An acquittal must be submitted to the Foundation via the Online Application Portal no later than 30 September of the year following the two-year granting period. If an acquittal is not submitted in a timely matter, new applications for funding from the non-compliant Institution may not be accepted. The acquittal must include:

- confirmation that the funds were used for the purpose specified in the grant proposal;
- confirmation that no infrastructure levies were deducted from the grant funds;
- a financial statement from the institution's CFO attesting to the full expenditure of the granted sum. Any remaining monies must be returned to the Foundation;
- a one-page lay description of research results and a relevant photo for inclusion on the Foundation's website; and
- copies of any publications that acknowledge the Foundation's contribution to the research.

Extension Requests

Funds must be expended by 30 September of the year following the two-year granting period. Extension requests will not be granted. Any funds that remain unspent after this deadline must be returned to the Foundation.

Contact

Enquiries regarding the application process may be sent to grants@cooperfoundation.org.au.

Appendix

SMALL IMAGE

230 × 331

MEDIUM IMAGE

431 X 280

LARGE IMAGE

639 X 241