Rebecca L. Cooper
Medical Research Foundation

2025 Rebecca Cooper Fellowship Application Guidelines

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The Rebecca Cooper Fellowship (*"Fellowship"*) is a prestigious award named in honour of the late Rebecca Lillian Cooper, who generously endowed her entire estate to establish The Rebecca L Cooper Medical Research Foundation. The Fellowship is targeted at Mid-Career researchers who have established a strong research program and are on track to become leaders in their chosen area of Medical Research.

Funding

The award of The Rebecca Cooper Fellowship provides a salary component of $220,000 per annum (exclusive of GST) and a Research Support Package (*"RSP"*) of $80,000 per annum (exclusive of GST), for a period of five years commencing 1 January 2025.

The Fellowship supports salary and direct research costs; the two cannot be separated.

The Administering Institution ("*Institution*") must agree to meet any additional employment-related expenses for the recipient, as well as the normal overhead and operating expenses of the Institution, as required to support the Fellow's research.

Successful applicants must commit minimum 0.8 Full Time Equivalent to the Fellowship. Where the Fellowship is accepted on a part-time basis, the Fellowship will be paid pro-rata.

Applicants must not be the beneficiary of an award, fellowship or grant:

- held concurrently with the Fellowship that would preclude them from working less than a full time equivalent of 0.8 during ordinary working hours in the carrying out of their research;
- which provides a salary or a contribution towards the payment of their salary in addition to the salary component of the Fellowship.

Foundation Funding Priorities

You must have a research focus in one of the following disease areas:

- Brain Sciences: Psychiatry or Neurology (excluding Dementias, Motor Neuron Disease, Psychology and Cognitive Interventions, and COVID-19)
- Endocrinology (excluding Diabetes and COVID-19)
- Geriatrics (excluding Dementias and COVID-19)
- Lung Disease (other than Cancer and COVID-19)
- Rheumatology (excluding impact of COVID-19)
- Vision Sciences (excluding impact of COVID-19)
- Dermatology (excluding Skin Cancer and COVID 19)

The Foundation is particularly committed to funding discovery research that will increase understanding of the biological mechanisms causing diseases within the areas of support listed above. The Foundation will also consider funding translational research that is clearly based on an understanding of disease mechanisms and biology and has the potential to change clinical practice for treating a disease or its symptoms in its nominated areas of research interests. Clinical research, such as cohort studies or clinical trials, will not be given a high funding priority.

Application Rules

1. Applications open **1 August 2024** and close at **5pm AEST on 30 August 2024**.
2. Late applications will not be accepted. Difficulties using the Online Application Portal will not be accepted as a reason for late submission. If issues arise during the submission of an application, The Foundation must be notified of the issues by email. If possible, any problems will be corrected prior to the application deadline.
3. Applicants may only submit one application per year.

Non-Competitive Applications

To reduce the strain placed on the Foundation's review processes by non-competitive applications the following rule will apply where an Institution submits **three or more** applications.

Where more than 50% of applications submitted by the relevant Institution are deemed *non-competitive*:[1]

1. The Institution's Research Office will be contacted to request that candidates for future funding rounds be more thoroughly screened.
2. On the second instance, the relevant Institution will receive an official warning.
3. On the third instance, the relevant Institution will be suspended from applying for Foundation funding for three years.

Overlap With Other Fellowship Funding

The Rebecca Cooper Fellowship may not be held in conjunction with another Fellowship from another funding body. Delayed commencement of no more than 6 months may be considered should overlap arise.

Eligibility Criteria

Qualifications

To apply you must be qualified as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in a Medicine-related field of Science or a Doctor of Medicine (MD) with a postgraduate PhD equivalent. The Foundation will not accept qualifications including a MBBS, Masters degrees and MD as a research degree.

Seniority

1. You must be 10-15 years post-doctoral on 1 January of the application year unless Career Disruption applies (refer "Claims of Career Disruption").
   This means that the date of the formal notice of award of your PhD/MD must fall within the date range 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2013 (inclusive). Please note that the date of degree conferral is not to be used.
2. You must hold the appointment of Associate Professor (level D) or Professor (level E).
   Eligibility is determined by paid academic appointment level, not honorary appointments you may hold.

[1] Applications ranked in the bottom 85% of all applications are deemed non-competitive.

Employment and Location

You must be employed by a credentialed Australian Research Institution and carry out the research activities described in the application within Australia.

Eligible Institutions are limited to those that are NHMRC Approved Research Institutes (ARIs) and/or a member of AAMRI.

Institutions that are not NHMRC ARIs and/or AAMRI member organisations may apply to become a Rebecca L. Cooper Medical Research Foundation Approved Research Institution. To obtain such status, an institution must:

- Be a Not-for-profit organisation;
- Operate within Australia (the Foundation does not allow funds to be transferred overseas);
- Prove that it carries out research that is submitted to stringent peer review;
- Have a formal Research and Ethics Committee overseeing all research related activities.

Please email grants@cooperfoundation.org.au for more information regarding application to become a Rebecca L. Cooper Medical Research Foundation Approved Research Institution.

Recipients of Other Awards

You are **permitted to apply** for the Rebecca Cooper Fellowship if:

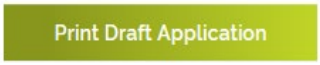
1. The outcome of an application for another source of funding is pending.
2. Existing Fellowship funding is due to expire no later than 30 June 2025 (refer to p.2 "Overlap With Other Fellowship Funding")

You are **precluded from applying** for The Rebecca Cooper Fellowship if you have previously been awarded the Rebecca Cooper Fellowship.

How to Apply

1. Create a user account for the Online Application Portal, if you do not have an existing user account.
2. Log in to your account and select "Apply for Fellowship".
3. Complete all five-sections of the application form by following the prompts. Should you wish to complete the form in multiple sittings, you may save your submission as a draft using the "*Save Draft*" button located at the bottom of each screen.

4. Seek feedback on your application from your RAO prior to submitting it for RAO approval. You may generate a draft copy of your application using the "Print Draft Application" button at the end of the form.



5. Submit your completed application form for RAO Approval using the "*Submit for RAO Approval*" button located at the end of the form. Please note that an application may not be amended once it is submitted for RAO approval.

   Submit For RAO Approval

6. Confirm that your application is 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.

RAO Approval

The RAO listed on your application will receive an email requesting confirmation that the Administering Institution accepts terms of the grant as stipulated in the Application Guidelines as well as the Foundation's general Terms & Conditions.

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.
Email communication will be sent from noreply@cooperfoundation.org.au. It is advisable to add this email address as a safe email address to ensure you receive communications from The Foundation.

Fellowship Proposal

Step four of the application form requires you to prepare a proposal in accordance with the requirements outlined below.

Proposal Content

Your proposal should include details of:

- your key achievements to date;
- where you see your future;
- how this award will contribute to your future career aspirations;
- details of your research including your vision for the next five years and the importance of the research you propose to conduct; and
- why your experience and qualifications make you particularly well-equipped to undertake the research you envisage.

Do not include links to a webpage, a reference list or appendices.

Proposal should be written 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.

It is recommended that you draft your proposal in MS Word, and then copy and paste the content into the text editor included in the application form. To avoid any formatting issues, please ensure that content is pasted from MS Word, and not directly from a website.

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

Inclusion of Figures

You may include a maximum of one figure in your 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.

Biographical Sketch

Step five of the application form requires you to provide:

- a list of your positions and honours held in the past five years, beginning with current;
- a list of your education and training beginning with baccalaureate or other initial professional education (include post-doctoral training and residency training if applicable);
- a brief bibliography summarising how many papers you have published and how many times they have been cited. Provide references (in AMA format) for your top five publications; and include the number of citings, the journal impact factor and the journal rank in field. Author lists may be abbreviated so long as it is clear which author you are (first, last or co-investigator). (max. 1200 characters, including spaces);
- details of current grant funding and research support; and
- details of your proposed mentor/mentorship arrangement (max. 300 characters, including spaces).

Referees

You are required to list two referees with your application. Referees may include mentors and may be located within or outside Australia. Should your application be shortlisted, referees will be emailed a questionnaire to complete which will provide them the opportunity to comment on your application and suitability for the award.

Mentor

Please list your career mentor, the person who mentors you with respect to your career.

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.

Workdays/week	FTE
0	0
1	0.2
2	0.4
3	0.6
4	0.8

    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 your Claim of Career Disruption 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 of applicants who qualified in the period 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2008, who would otherwise not be eligible to apply. That is, the applicants who were awarded their PhD/MD between 15-18 years prior will be deemed eligible commensurate with the period of the Career Disruption claimed.

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 or continuous part-time employment (with defined % full-time equivalent, FTE) due to circumstances defined as a career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 27 calendar days or more;
2. **not** exceed a total of three years; and
3. **not** be counted twice if there is overlap with another career disruption.

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.

Fellowship Review and Award

Fellowship applications are reviewed by three members of the Fellowship Advisory Committee. Funding decisions are made by The Foundation's directors at a meeting to be held in August of the application year.

Applications are assessed with respect to three weighted criteria:

1. **Future vision (45%)** – Does the applicant have a clear and feasible vision of their research and career direction?
2. **Personal Achievements / Track Record (35%)** – Has the applicant displayed the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to implement the vision (including a history of raising funding, research output, research quality etc.)
3. **Research significance (20%)**

Application Outcomes

Successful applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application under embargo in December of the application year, in advance of the official announcement.

Under the embargo period, applicants can share outcomes with the research team and partner organisations (where applicable), however, they must not publicise the information until the embargo has been lifted. This includes posting comments regarding outcomes in public domains such as social forums, websites, journals or newspapers.

During the embargo period successful applicants may accept offers and proceed with planning. This includes seeking necessary approvals (for example, ethics approvals) and recruiting staff. Successful applicants may add grants to CVs for review (for example, as part of a new grant application) provided they add the words 'under embargo'. Research projects may commence if the embargo continues past the commencement date.

Feedback on applications will not provided and The Foundation will not enter 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.

Fellowship Administration

A deed will be entered into between The Foundation and the Administering Institution. That deed will set out the administrative requirements of the Fellowship including payment and reporting requirements.

General Terms and Conditions

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.

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

Contact

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

Appendix

SMALL IMAGE

MEDIUM IMAGE

LARGE IMAGE