Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowships Round 5

Funding Rules
Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowships Funding Rules (Round 5)

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1. Introduction

In line with the Queensland Government’s *Queensland Advancing Health Research 2026* strategy and the *My health, Queensland’s future: Advancing health 2026*, the Department of Health, through the Health Innovation, Investment and Research Office (HIIRO), supports and encourages health and medical research and its translation into better healthcare across the Queensland Health system. There are several current Queensland Health focus areas that align with HIIRO’s Fellowship programs. These include:

- Keeping Queenslanders healthy
- Promoting the right care in the right place and at the right time
- Putting the patient at the centre

These Funding Rules describe the provision and distribution of funding for the Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowships offered by the Department in partnership with the Queensland Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (QBNMBA).

The Funding Rules will be supported by a Queensland Health Research Fellowship Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions (generic version 2018.2) (Agreement) between the Department of Health (‘the Department’) and the successful administering organisation (Recipient).

These Funding Rules provide information for applicants who are considering applying for a Fellowship in Round 5.

2. Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowships (NMRF)

The Department is responsible for administering and managing research funds that were previously managed by the Queensland Nursing Council (QNC). To date, four rounds of the research fellowships have been administered by the Department.

The purpose of the Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowships (NMRF) is to support nurses and midwives to improve health outcomes for Queenslanders through research that:

- enhances the value of the professions through discipline specific research
- promotes innovative healthcare through evidence-based nursing and midwifery practice and new models of care
- contributes to the advancement of nursing and midwifery policy and education.

**Categories and available funding**

Prospective Fellows have the opportunity to apply for one Fellowship in one of the four NMRF categories. The following fellowships are available in Round 5:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount awarded (GST exc) and duration</th>
<th>Estimated number of awards for this round*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice Researcher</td>
<td>Up to $15,000 over 12 months</td>
<td>Up to 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early-Career Researcher</td>
<td>Up to $20,000 over 12 months</td>
<td>Up to 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Researcher</td>
<td>Up to $120,000 over 2 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Implementation</td>
<td>Up to $120,000 over 2 years</td>
<td>Up to 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subject to funding and application quality

**Eligibility**

A Chief Investigator (CI) (the proposed Fellow) is the person who takes the lead role in conducting the research activities. CIs must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- be a nursing and/or midwifery practitioner who works in and across the public and private sectors, universities or non-government organisations;
- be duly qualified as a health professional in the applicable discipline;
- must continue to be employed, principally practice, reside and conduct research in Queensland for the duration of the Fellowship;
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia for the duration of the Fellowship and have no adverse limits or conditions applied to their registration;
- be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to legally practice as a nurse or midwife within their scope of practice;
- Applicants can apply for or hold a NMRF in one category only in any one round; and
- Applicants cannot apply as a CI if they are a CI on a project current funded under this scheme.

Applicants should ensure their time commitments are sufficient to ensure the viability of the Fellowship.

The funds provided by the Fellowship may not cover the total cost of the research and it is the responsibility of the Fellow to ensure that sufficient funding is available to demonstrate the success of the project. This must be described in the application.

1. **Novice Researcher Fellowship**

The objective of this Fellowship is to support Novice Researchers by assisting them to develop a credible research track record through the conduct of rigorous research.

For the purposes of this Fellowship, a Novice Researcher will:

- have the ability to conduct research but lack experience in applying for and conducting research
- not have been named as a recipient of previous competitive research grant funds
• be supported by a mentor who possesses relevant skills and experience for the duration of the project.

The Fellowship should be used to achieve the stated outcomes of the project and cannot be used to supplement the applicant’s salary.

Applicants for this category may be an individual or a team. If a Novice Researcher has a team, all members of the team must meet the criteria of a Novice Researcher.

The Novice Researcher must be the Chief Investigator (CI) of the project, and their nominated mentor must play an active and supportive role as a mentor through all stages of the Fellowship.

2. **Early-Career Researcher Fellowship**

The objective of this Fellowship is to support Early-Career Researchers to develop their research expertise and establish a credible track record of research achievement through the conduct of rigorous research. This Fellowship also aims to assist Early-Career Researchers in securing larger grants from other funding sources.

For the purposes of this Fellowship, an Early-Career Researcher will:

• have the ability to conduct research and have experience in applying for and conducting research
• have conducted no more than the equivalent of six years full-time research in total (including the completion of research higher degrees).

Applicants for this category may be an individual or a team. If an Early-Career Researcher has a team, all members of the team must meet the criteria of an Early-Career Researcher.

3. **Experienced Researcher Fellowship**

The objective of this Fellowship is to encourage research activity and evidence based practice in the nursing and midwifery professions.

For the purposes of this Fellowship, an Experienced Researcher will:

• have completed greater than the equivalent of six years full-time research (including the completion of research higher degrees). and demonstrated outcomes from previous research projects
• have been a principal or Associate Investigator for a major project funded by a competitive grant.

The Experienced Researcher Fellowship is available to teams of researchers only, where the CI is experienced in conducting research and managing research budgets. The team will include at least one Novice Researcher for the duration of the project. Applications from teams without a Novice Researcher will not be considered.

4. **Research Implementation Fellowship**

The objective of this Fellowship is to support research that:

• implements/validates research findings at the local clinical level, to promote best practice in patient care
• encourages the use of credible published research findings to inform practice at the local level
• improves collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and decision makers/policy developers; and
• encourages communication of research findings in ‘plain English’ so implications are readily accessible to all stakeholders, including non-experts in the field.

The Research Implementation Fellowship is available to teams of researchers only. The team will include at least one Novice Researcher for the duration of the project. Applications from teams without a Novice Researcher will not be considered.

The Research Implementation Fellowship will not fund:
• projects focused on professional development or student education
• the production of teaching materials for nurses/midwives or students, even when some research may be involved
• projects that consist primarily or substantially of conference activity
• the development of research aids and tools, such as computer programs
• projects that request funds to supplement other current research projects.

Funding Use
Funding may be used for the following eligible project costs:

• Salary costs for dedicated fellowship research/technical staff, including research assistants, contract statisticians or other relevant experts, payment for services required such as pathology, or costs directly related to data collection.
• Project costs directly related to the proposed program of research including consumables.
• Travel and conference attendance costs for Novice Researcher category fellowships only as follows – a maximum of 10% of Funds may be used to attend national or international conferences where the CI, or member of the approved research team, is a speaker at that conference and they are disseminating the findings of the fellowship research project. This must be clearly indicated in the Application budget as a separate item.
• Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the commencement of the fellowship can be claimed.

Items not eligible for funding include:

• Salaries for the applicant/Chief Investigator or named Associate Investigators.
• Institutional overheads and operational costs, including general facility and accommodation related costs.
• Travel and conference attendance costs for Early-Career Researcher, Experienced Researcher and Research Implementation category fellowships.
• Costs associated with non-fellowship projects/programs of the Recipient or partner organisations.
• Salary costs related to non-fellowship activities.
• Costs associated with administrative support staff.
• Contract research for services that can be performed by the applicant or Recipient.

**Funding Administration and Conditions**

• If successful, the Fellow must confirm an administering organisation (‘the Recipient’) to which the funding is paid.

• The Recipient must be a Queensland-based agency that has an Australian Business Number and is registered for GST. This includes Hospital and Health Services (HHSs), universities and research institutes. There can be only one Recipient for each Fellow.

• Fellowships are awarded to develop the careers of specific individuals, and are not transferable.

• Applicants and successful Fellows may apply or hold other grants outside of this scheme. However, the other grants must not:
  o duplicate funding for the Fellowship research, or
  o impact the Fellow’s time commitment on the NMRF research.

• The Department may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any funding duplication.

• Fellowships are non-renewable and must be completed within the 1-2 year duration period. No additional funds will be provided by the Department.

• Costs incurred before the Fellowship commences will not be reimbursed.

• An estimated commencement date should be provided in the application form, with the actual commencement date to be confirmed if the application is successful.

• A NMRF Round 5 Fellowship must commence within one month of the Agreement being signed. Please note that ethics and governance approvals must be in place within 3 months of the Agreement being signed. If these timeframes are not met, the Department has the right to withdraw the Fellowship offer.

• Fellowships are to support a discrete project, which may be a component of a larger study.

• The successful Fellow must take the lead role in conducting and progressing the fellowship research.

**3. Application process**

It is the administering organisation’s and the proposed Fellow’s responsibility to read and familiarise themselves with these Funding Rules and all other documents referred to within these Funding Rules.
Applicants must download and complete the NMRF Fellowships Application Form (Round 5) including the Funding Agreement Application Declaration page, and Schedule 1 – Project Details (sections 6, 7 and 13) and submit it to HIIRO_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au before 12pm AEST, 15 March 2019.

Late applications will not be accepted.

The application should be submitted in a single PDF file using the naming convention Surname_Firstname_NMRF application.pdf

Applicants must use 11 point font. Where there is no response to a question, please indicate ‘not applicable’.

The application form must be submitted in its original form by the applicant organisation. Applicants are not permitted to edit the underlying template of the application form (unless where indicated).

The application cannot be revised after submission. However, applicants must advise the Department of any changes that are likely to affect eligibility.

Applicants may withdraw an application at any time by notifying the Department in writing at HIIRO_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au.

All costs and expenses incurred by applicants in any way associated with the preparation and submission of an application must be borne entirely and exclusively by the applicant.

No applicant will be entitled to claim compensation or loss from the Department for any matter arising out of the application process, including but not limited to, any failure by the Department to comply with the Funding Rules.

4. Assessment process

The applications will initially be assessed by Department staff for completeness and eligibility. The Department has the right to remove applications that are incomplete, ineligible, not in keeping with the NMRF Round 5 Funding Rules or clearly non-competitive, and to provide preliminary advice to the independent review panel.

Exclusion of applications may take place at any time during the selection process, including under the following circumstances:

- the application contravenes or is inconsistent with the NMRF Round 5 Funding Rules and associated documentation;
- the application was not submitted through HIIRO_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au;
- the application includes any false or misleading information;
- the application is incomplete or late;
- if the applicant attempts to give or offer any inducement, gift or reward, which could in any way influence the Department’s actions in relation to an application; or
- If the applicant, or a person on their behalf, attempts to contact members of the independent review panel in relation to the assessment of their application or the peer review process.
Eligible applications will be assessed on a competitive, merit-based process against selection criteria by an independent review panel, which will provide recommendations on fellowship award recipients to the Department. However, the Department of Health has absolute discretion in making the final decision on awarding recipients.

If an applicant’s circumstances change after submission of an application for a Fellowship, the Recipient must notify the Department immediately.

The independent review panel may take into consideration the advice of external assessors in short-listing applicants. External assessors may be chosen by the independent review panel, but shall not be nominated by the applicant. External assessors agree to assist the Department on the basis of confidentiality, and as such, their identity will not be disclosed.

Applicants who are successfully shortlisted may, if necessary, be invited to an interview with the independent review panel. This will most likely be at the applicant’s expense and may be conducted by teleconference or videoconference, if appropriate. The Department may also request further information or clarification by the applicant in writing.

The Department will advise each applicant in writing of the outcome of their application. No information will be released verbally.

The outcomes are final. The Department will not enter into any oral or written correspondence about selection decisions.

**Selection criteria**

The selection criteria are the same for all NMRF categories, however the weighting applied to each criterion varies depending on the NMRF category. The independent review panel will assess each application against the selection criteria as set out below:

1. **Research quality (weighting of 40% for all NMRF categories)**

This criterion is to assess the clarity of the hypotheses or research objectives, and the quality and feasibility of the project design.

Assessment of research quality may include assessment on the following terms:

- **Clarity of the hypothesis of research objectives, including:**
  - Has the method/framework/approach been partially tested?
  - What are the outcomes sought in the proposed study, and how will they be measured?
  - Is it well integrated and adequately developed?
- **Clear and appropriate research plan, including:**
  - Is the project relevant to the respective profession/objective?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study and its design?
  - Have any major pitfalls or problems been overlooked, and have alternative approaches been considered?
  - Is the plan well informed by knowledge of the literature?
  - Is the design appropriate for the aims of the research?
- **Feasibility:**
Will the research plan successfully address the stated hypotheses or research objectives?

Are the research outcomes clearly described, significant and relevant to the practice setting and patient care?

Are the goals concrete and achievable?

Does the project demonstrate excellence in project management, implementation and evaluation?

Is the investigating team appropriate, is it capable of achieving the goals, and does it have the right skills and expertise?

2. Significance and/or innovation (weighting of 40% for Novice Researcher and Early-Career Researcher Fellowship categories; weighting of 25% for Experienced Researcher and Research Implementation Fellowship categories)

This criterion includes the potential to increase knowledge about human health, disease diagnoses or biology of agents that affect human health, or the application of new ideas, procedures, technologies, programs or health policy settings to important topics that will impact on Queenslanders.

Innovation refers to the originality of the research, and significance refers to the project’s potential importance or impact on the field. Applications are not necessarily rated on both significance and innovation.

Consider whether the project will:

• challenge or significantly advance existing knowledge in the field
• present a unique hypothesis or address a critical barrier to progress in the field
• develop new/novel or creative concepts, approaches, methodology, tools or technologies in the area of research
• address an important problem directly related to the project area
• impact practice or policy in the field.

CIs are required to clearly describe the new ideas, procedures, technologies, programs or health policy settings.

3. Track record relative to opportunity (weighting of 10% for Novice Researcher and Early-Career Researcher Fellowship categories; weighting of 25% for Experienced Researcher and Research Implementation Fellowship categories)

Track record is considered in terms of whether a CI’s previous research demonstrates that the researcher (or team) is capable of achieving the proposed project and/or has the ability to deliver the proposed project in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience.

CIs applying as a Novice Researcher will not be assessed on their track record, but rather their ability to undertake research, including a good support network, sound project idea and methodology and good understanding of the research area.
is also based on the track record of the identified mentor and their ability to support a Novice Researcher.

Track record may encompass the national and international standing of the CI, based on their research achievements, including but not limited to:

- **Record of research achievement.** CIs should outline any of the following from the past five years:
  - most recent significant publications
  - publications demonstrating innovation and significance in past accomplishments
  - impact or outcome of previous research achievements, including effects on health care practices or policy
  - awards or honours in recognition of achievements.

- **Contribution to discipline or area.** CIs should outline any of the following from the past five years:
  - invitations to speak at international meetings
  - editorial appointments
  - specialist and high-level health policy committee appointments
  - other research-related achievements, such as:
    - influence on clinical/health policy or practice, or provision of influential advice to health authorities and government
    - impacts on health via the broad dissemination of research outcomes; for example, via mainstream media, the community or industry involvement.

Track record is considered in relation to opportunity, having regard to factors such as career disruption, administrative and clinical/teaching load, and typical performance (including publications) for the field in question. Track record will be judged on the most recent five years. CIs should identify periods where their career has been disrupted, and provide a brief explanation of the reason in the application.

The track record of CIs and other key personnel listed on the application, relative to opportunity, may be assessed in terms of:

- record of achievement, relative to opportunity
- contribution to their field of research
- their national and/or international reputation in their fields
- for Novice Researchers – how the CI and mentor will operate including meeting, planning and decision making.

4. **Project budget (weighting of 10% for all NMRF categories)**

The project budget is considered in terms of whether the funds support the achievement of the proposed Fellowship research.

Applicants must outline the budget and justification for budgetary items in terms of need and cost for the proposed Fellowship research. Please refer to “Funding Use” for further details on eligible and ineligible budget items.
Career disruption

A career disruption is considered to be a prolonged interruption to an applicant’s capacity to work due to pregnancy and childbirth, major illness and carer responsibilities (including parental leave). The period of career disruption may be used to determine eligibility and to allow for inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application by the review panel. Where relevant, applicants should nominate periods where their career has been disrupted over the last five years for a period of 90 days or more, and provide a brief explanation of the reason in their application.

Relative to opportunity

Applications will be assessed within the framework of ‘relative to opportunity’ where significant academic, clinical responsibilities or industry work placements have impacted on the applicant’s ability to conduct research over the last five years.

Confidentiality and privacy

The Department will use supplied information for the purpose of assessing Fellowship applications. All information provided during the application process is received and accepted by the Department in confidence, subject to any applicable statutory exception.

Information comprising the names of successful Recipients, Fellows, funding awarded, and area of research may be made publicly available by the Department.

Details of unsuccessful applicants will remain confidential. Documents held by the Queensland Government are subject to the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and will be retained as required under the Public Records Act 2002 (Qld).

5. Contractual Arrangements

The Recipient and the Department do not enter into a binding legal relationship unless and until a subsequent Agreement is executed between the Department and the Recipient.

The Fellowship is offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the Agreement, which is an agreement between the Recipient and the Department.

In signing the Agreement, all parties agree to the conditions contained in the Agreement and Schedules, including that research complies with relevant laws, guidelines and statements.

Dissemination and Publicity

Successful Fellows must acknowledge the Queensland Government’s funding in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Successful Fellows should actively promote their research, provide broad fellowship information if required, and attend media/promotion events if requested.
It is expected that the Fellow will make time available during the Fellowship to publicly present their research findings or other outputs to audiences including the Department, the Queensland public health system and external researchers.

Successful recipient must not make any public announcement or advertisement in any medium in relation to the application process or outcome without the prior written approval from the Department.

The Recipient must notify the Department immediately regarding the timing of media releases and announcements about the Fellowship are proposed.

6. Further information

Further information or specific queries regarding the NMRF should be directed to:

   Health Innovation, Investment and Research Office (HIIRO)
   Office of the Director-General
   Department of Health
   Phone +61 (0) 7 3708 5061
   Email HIIRO_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au