

Queensland Health Clinical Research Fellowships - Round 8

Funding Guidelines

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For more information email: QH_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au.

An electronic version of this document is available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/research/researchers/grants-support/>

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1 Introduction

The Department of Health is proud to support Queensland Health clinician researchers to conduct research relevant to their work, to find new ways to deliver care and improve health outcomes.

These Guidelines describe the provision and distribution of funding for the Clinical Research Fellowships offered by the Department of Health (Department) in 2026 and provide information for [Applicants](#) who are considering applying for a Fellowship in Round 8.

The Queensland Health Clinical Research Fellowships (CRF) program is intended to support Queensland Health clinician researchers to undertake research linked to their practice. The program recognises that clinician researchers (including doctors, nurses, dentists, allied health practitioners, public health professionals and clinical scientists) are uniquely placed to identify clinical issues that can benefit from further research, lead patient-focused research discoveries and facilitate improved patient care through research translation.

The objectives of CRF are to:

- Support the career development of Queensland Health's emerging clinician researchers and research leaders, particularly toward securing competitive research funding from national agencies and other funding sources.
- Support health and medical research projects that have real potential to lead to better health outcomes for Queenslanders.
- Build collaborative linkages between Queensland Health and the wider Queensland health and medical research sector to support the translation of research discoveries into frontline healthcare.
- Build health and medical research capacity across all of Queensland, including for regional, rural and remote areas.

1.1 Categories and grant amount

For CRF Round 8, four general award categories will provide a pipeline of support for clinician researchers at various career stages.

The Department is committed to supporting equity of access to research funding across Queensland. Applications from researchers based at regional, rural and remote health facilities are especially encouraged.

The following tables describe the Fellowship categories and the intent of the funding.

Category	Maximum award (GST exclusive)	Duration	Additional weighting for regional, rural and remote Applicants	Mentorship Supplement (optional)
Novice Researcher (Regional, Rural & Remote)	Up to \$30,000	1 year	N/A	✓
Emerging Researcher	Up to \$100,000	1-2 years	✓	✓
Early-career Researcher	Up to \$200,000	2-3 years	✓	N/A
Mid-career Researcher	Up to \$250,000	2-3 years	✓	N/A

Category	Applicant profile	Funding intent
Novice Researcher (Regional, Rural & Remote)	Novice clinician researchers employed by and conducting research in regional, rural and remote HHSs Profile <i>Typically, a Novice Researcher has no or very limited experience in formal research activities. They may be exploring their first project or contributing to a team-based study. Researchers at this stage require structured support such as training, mentoring and guidance with governance and ethics processes</i>	• Introduce clinicians to research. • Foster early interest and engagement in research. • Establish connections and mentoring relationships. • Build foundational research knowledge and skills.
Emerging Researcher	Up to 2 years of active research participation Profile <i>Generally, an emerging researcher is gaining experience in developing study protocols, obtaining ethics approvals, data collection, data analysis or interpretation of findings; and publishing in peer-reviewed journals, either as the primary author or a co-author. Researchers at this stage still require support and guidance with research and related processes.</i>	• Support developing skills in core research competencies. • Enable publication and dissemination of early research findings. • Develop pathways for progression to independent research roles.
Early-career Researcher	Between 2-5 years of active research participation Profile <i>Early-career researchers have begun to develop independent research skills and contribute more substantially to research activities. They have authored or co-authored a body of peer-reviewed</i>	• Strengthen research independence and leadership potential. • Support skills and experience towards competitive research funding applications.

	<i>publications and participated in grant applications. Researchers at this stage typically conduct research with some guidance but are increasingly taking lead roles in projects or sub-studies.</i>	• Build research impact and track record.
Mid-career Researcher	From 5 years to up to 10 years post-PhD or equivalent, excluding career disruptions <i>Where an Applicant does not hold a Research Higher Degree, they must demonstrate a research track record equivalent to less than ten years post-Research Higher Degree.</i> Profile <i>Mid-career researchers typically lead independent research projects, have authored multiple publications, have experience in supervision and mentorship of junior researchers, and play a key role in grant development and research strategy. They may have experience leading or contributing significantly to competitive grant applications, including NHMRC or equivalent schemes, and may have had a “near miss” or some funding success, demonstrating developing competitiveness at a national level.</i> <i>Researchers at this stage are developing leadership in their field, have demonstrated research impact, and are typically establishing their profile. Typically, a researcher with a well-established national or international profile, significant funding and/or publication track record is unlikely to be considered as a Mid-career researcher for this funding.</i>	• Consolidate leadership in research and translational impact. • Contribute towards activities for research impact, including those that enable large scale competitive funding applications. • Support capacity building including supervision and mentorship of junior researchers.

Additional weighting for regional, rural, and remote applicants

Researchers based at regional, rural, or remote health facilities applying to the Emerging Researcher, Early-career Researcher and Mid-career Researcher categories will be eligible for an additional weighting to their final score:

- Researcher based at regional health facility – additional 10% weighting
- Researcher based at rural or remote health facility - additional 15% weighting.

Regional facilities are generally considered to be within Cairns and Hinterland HHS; Central Queensland HHS; Darling Downs HHS; Mackay HHS; Townsville HHS; West Moreton HHS; Wide Bay HHS.

Rural and Remote facilities are generally considered to be Central West HHS; North West HHS; South West HHS and Torres and Cape HHS as well as Rural and Remote facilities within regional HHSs.

Health facilities listed on the Rural and Remote Health Facilities map are considered rural and remote facilities:

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/engagement/networks/rural-remote/rural-facilities/map>

1.2 Eligibility

Prospective Fellows **must** meet the following eligibility requirements:

- The proposed project must be research that is eligible for and subject to ethics approval and Queensland Health Research Governance authorisation.
- The Fellowship category and duration requirements outlined in Section 2.2.
- Must not apply for a CRF in more than one category in this round.
- At the time the Fellowship commences and for the duration of the Fellowship, the Fellow must:
 - be employed and conduct research in Queensland
 - hold at least a 0.2FTE **salaried appointment** in a clinical or clinically related role (other than a research appointment) with Queensland Health or other publicly funded healthcare facility for the duration of the Fellowship.
 - be registered with the relevant professional registration board, or eligible for membership/accreditation with a professional association.
- The employing Queensland Health Hospital and Health Service (HHS) or other publicly funded healthcare facility must be named in the application as either the [Administering Organisation](#) **or** partner organisation.
- Except for Novice Researchers, Applicants must have in place a collaboration with a Queensland-based research organisation external to Queensland Health. A research organisation could include a Queensland university or medical research institute, not-for-profit entity and/or industry. A research organisation can assume the role of Administering Organisation **or** partner organisation in the application.
- Must not hold an active CRF from a previous round that would extend past 30 June 2027.
- For Novice Researcher – Regional, Rural and Remote category, must continue to be employed by and conduct research in: Cairns and Hinterland HHS; Central Queensland HHS; Central West HHS; Darling Downs HHS; Mackay HHS; North West HHS; South West HHS; Torres and Cape HHS; Townsville HHS; West Moreton HHS; or Wide Bay HHS.

The Applicant and Administering Organisation must ensure the application meets all eligibility requirements. Departmental staff will not make eligibility rulings before an application is submitted.

1.3 Conditions of funding

- The level of active research participation by successful Fellows (the time a Fellow will spend on the Fellowship research project) is expected, averaged over the duration of the Fellowship, to be at least 0.2 FTE.
- Applicants should ensure their time commitments are sufficient to ensure the viability of the Fellowship.
- The Fellowship eligibility requirements remain for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Applicants and successful Fellows may apply for or hold other grants outside of this scheme. However, the other grants must not:
 - duplicate funding for the research proposed for the Fellowship,

- duplicate funding of the Fellow's salary, or
- impact the Fellow's time commitment on the research proposed for the Fellowship.
- Fellowships are non-renewable and must be completed within the term of the Fellowship. No additional funds will be provided by the Department.
- Ethics and governance approvals should be in place within 3 months and no later than 6 months of the agreement being signed. If these timeframes are not met, the Department has the right to withdraw the offer.
- To expediate Queensland Health Ethics and Governance approvals, we recommend a parallel submission of ethics and governance approvals (as recommended in cl. 1.4 of the QH Research Governance Officers SOPs). We recommend that you talk to the HREC coordinator and Research Governance Officers for the committees that you are applying to at an early stage in your application process. Guides and link to contact details can be found here:
 - [Apply for ethics approval](#)
 - [Apply for governance authorisation](#)
 - [Researcher User Guide](#)
- Fellowships are awarded to develop the careers of specific individuals, in line with program goals, and are not transferable.
- The successful Fellow must take the lead role in conducting and progressing the Fellowship research.
- Novice, Emerging and Early-career Researcher Applicants must nominate at least one research supervisor.

1.4 Funding use

Funding may be used for the following eligible project costs:

- Fellow salary costs, including standard on-costs (leave loading, superannuation contributions, worker's compensation contributions and payroll tax), are eligible expenses. Where Fellowship funding is used for salary costs, the following conditions apply:
 - The total Queensland Health full-time equivalent (FTE) for the Fellow, including any Fellowship-funded component, must not exceed 1.0 FTE.
 - The salary rate used for the Fellowship-funded portion must not exceed the rate the Fellow would receive in their substantive clinical position.
- Salary costs for other dedicated Fellowship research/technical staff, including post-doctoral research staff.
- Project costs directly related to the proposed program of research including consumables.
- Travel costs, for the Fellow only, that are essential to the Fellowship as outlined in the application (excluding relocation) up to \$8,000 in total for fellows located in the metro and coastal areas and up to \$10,000 in total for fellows located in regional, rural and remote areas. This includes economy class travel only, reasonable accommodation and per diem expenses, and conference registration in accordance with Queensland Health travel policies.
- Equipment costs directly related to the proposed program of research up to a total of \$10,000 (including maintenance).

- Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the commencement of the Fellowship can be claimed.
- Publication costs for the primary publication arising from the Fellowship.

Items not eligible for funding include:

- Institutional on-costs above standard salary on-costs.
- Institutional overheads and operational costs, including general facility and accommodation related costs.
- Travel and conference attendance costs for dedicated Fellowship staff, other than the Fellow as outlined above.
- Costs associated with non-Fellowship projects/programs of the administering or partner organisations.
- Salary costs related to the non-Fellowship activities of the Fellow or other dedicated Fellowship staff.
- Costs associated with administrative support staff.
- Contract research for services that can be performed by the Applicant or Administering Organisation.
- Computers and laptops, unless highly specialised and essential to the project.
- Costs incurred outside of the duration of the Fellowship.

Where the funds provided by the Fellowship do not cover the total cost of the research, 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.

1.5 Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will guide the Review Panel's assessment of eligible applications for this Round.

Selection criteria	Novice Researcher (Regional, Rural & Remote)	Emerging Researcher	Early-career Researcher	Mid-career Researcher
1. Applicant track record and potential relative to career stage				
Strength of - research outputs (publications, grants, invited speaker, awards and prizes, patents, supervision and mentoring), - clinical/health impact of research (contributions to improved clinical practice, policy change and/or better health outcomes), - for Novice Researcher applicants with limited or no research experience, consideration will be given to the researcher's potential and capacity to conduct research, including supervision and mentoring arrangements, institutional support, etc.	5%	15%	20%	20%
Clinical research career vision and development plans for the next four years in the proposed research area.	15%	20%	20%	20%
2. Research project and potential				
The innovation, scientific quality and feasibility of the proposed research project including strength of partnerships/collaborations.	40%	35%	30%	25%
Potential for the Fellowship project to deliver better health outcomes for Queenslanders through impact to policy and practice taking into account: - Anticipated impact to health outcomes of target populations. - Strength of the plan to translate the research in to practice. - Engagement with Health Consumers.	40%	30%	30%	30%
Leadership and research capacity building.	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%
Additional weighting for Applicants from regional, rural & remote areas				
Researcher based out of a regional health facility <i>Regional facilities are generally considered to be those within Cairns and Hinterland HHS; Central Queensland HHS; Darling Downs HHS; Mackay HHS; Townsville HHS; West Moreton HHS; Wide Bay HHS.</i>	N/A	+10%		
Researcher based out of a rural or remote health facility refer: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/engagement/networks/rural-remote/rural-facilities/map	N/A	+15%		

For Early-career and Mid-career awards, cash or in-kind contributions to the Fellowship from the administering or other partner organisation/s will be highly regarded.

1.6 Mentorship supplement eligibility, funding conditions and use

Mentors are invaluable and strongly encouraged for researchers who are building their research skills and experience. Mentorships help to build research capability and mentee profile through guidance, support, and a shared commitment to achieving career progression.

For novice and emerging clinician researchers, and especially those who are based out of regional, rural, or remote health facilities where access to support may be more limited, a targeted financial mentorship supplement of up to \$10,000 (additional to the Fellowship) is available to support the fostering of a successful mentorship relationship between an eligible researcher and a more experienced researcher.

To be considered for the supplement, a proposal for a mentorship is required. The Mentorship Supplement funding must directly support the goals of the proposed mentorship. Applications will be considered against the strength and feasibility of the proposal to achieve the objective of the Mentorship Supplement, to support the fostering of a successful mentorship relationship between an eligible researcher and a more experienced researcher.

An eligible researcher and their chosen mentor should work together to develop a proposed mentorship plan suited to their needs which demonstrates a clear plan for mentee research capability and career development and reflects a strong focus on the mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentorship plans may include, by example:

- The goals and anticipated outcomes for the mentorship, the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the mentor and mentee.
- Details of any planned activities, contact time and frequency, training, or support structures for the mentee's research capability development.
- The suitability of the chosen mentor to undertake the role, which may include information on their relevant area of expertise, their track record and past mentoring experience.
- Proposed expenditure of the supplement fund.

The Mentorship Supplement funding must directly support the goals of the proposed mentorship. Funding may be used for reasonable costs to optimise the supportive relationship between the mentor and the mentee and costs need to be clearly identified in the mentorship plan.

This may include costs related to:

- Facilitating mentor/mentee contact: funding for impactful contact time between the eligible researcher and the mentor, comprising stipends/honorariums or reasonable travel costs.
- Targeted skills development: funding may be used for attendance at workshops/training, site visits or other opportunities, where this is an identified area of need, and this supports the overall goals of the mentorship and development of the eligible researcher.
- Career networking: funding may be used for attendance at conferences, symposia, or professional events where this supports the overall goals of the mentorship; for example, the mentor can facilitate introductions to build and expand the eligible researcher's career network.

A Letter of Support from the nominated Mentor will be required, reflecting the commitment to the proposed mentorship plan.

If funded, the mentorship plan will be reflected in the Agreement and reported against as part of the Fellowship obligations.

2 Application process

It is the Administering Organisation and the Applicant's responsibility to read and familiarise themselves with these Funding Guidelines and all other documents referred to within these Funding Guidelines.

Applicants should allow enough time before the Fellowship funding closing date for the relevant delegate to review and sign the application.

Applicants must submit a completed Fellowship application form (available [here](#)) before 11:59pm AEST, Monday 7 December 2026. The application should be submitted as a single, consolidated, bookmarked PDF file using the naming convention **Surname_Firstname_Category_CRFR8 application.pdf** and include, in the following order:

- Completed and signed application form
- A reference list (if required)
- Applicant publications list
- Letters of support

Late applications will not be accepted.

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

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

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

All costs and expenses incurred by Applicants related to the preparation and submission of their application are the sole responsibility of the Applicant and will not be borne by the Department.

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 Guidelines.

The Department will not provide advice to Applicants or Administering Organisations on the competitiveness of an application at any stage during the application and assessment stages.

Following the assessment process for merit-listed applications, and with the Applicant's prior consent, the Department may share the Applicant's name and project title with key funding partners for the purpose of identifying additional supports or potential funding.

2.1 Letters of support

The application **must** include a letter of support from the Administering Organisation and partner organisation/s. The Applicant's employing Hospital and Health Service (HHS) or other publicly funded healthcare facility must be either the administering or a partner organisation.

Each letter of support (maximum 2 pages per letter) must include:

- Details of the clinical and/or research strengths of the organisation, and the alignment of the proposed Fellowship and Fellowship research activities with these strengths.
- Support for the Fellowship, including details of any cash and in-kind commitments.

- Letters of support from HHSs or other publicly funded healthcare facilities (whether acting as Administering Organisation or partner organisation) must also confirm the Applicant's current employment arrangements and the Applicant's proposed employment arrangements for the duration of the Fellowship, having considered any clinical service delivery implications. This includes confirmation of any changes to the Applicant's FTE where Fellowship-funded salary costs are intended to supplement or increase it. Applicants who hold formal conjoint appointments between a HHS and a Queensland research institution or university, including those where the research institution or university is the employer, must confirm the HHS's financial contribution to the conjoint appointment and the clinical elements of the role.
- Each letter must be on organisational letterhead and signed by the relevant person with appropriate authority to support the application and any commitments. For a HHS, the letter should be signed by the Chief Executive or other appropriately authorised delegate. *Please note: The Department cannot provide advice on who has authority to sign – please liaise directly with your administering and partner organisation/s for advice.*

Failure to comply with the letter of support requirements will make an application ineligible.

3 Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by Department staff for completeness and eligibility. The Department has the right to disqualify applications that are not in keeping with the Fellowship Funding Guidelines. Applications may be excluded at any time during the selection process, including under the following circumstances:

- The application contravenes or is inconsistent with the Fellowship Funding Guidelines and associated documentation.
- The application was not submitted through QH_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.
- 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.

Applications will be assessed under a competitive, merit-based process against selection criteria by a Review Panel, which will provide recommendations on Fellowship award recipients to the Department. However, the Department has absolute discretion in making the final decision on awarding recipients.

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

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

Limited feedback may be provided to Applicants including those who request this in writing from the Department. Feedback will only be provided in response to written requests if it is received within three months of Applicants being advised of the outcome.

3.1 Confidentiality and privacy

The Department of Health ('Department') is collecting your information to process your Fellowship application. Personal information collected by the Department is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. The personal information provided by you may be disclosed to the individuals and entities

listed in your application for verification purposes. Your personal information will not be disclosed to other third parties without consent, unless the disclosure is authorised or required by or under law. If personal information is not provided, the Department will be unable to assess your application. For any questions regarding this collection notice, please contact the Fellowships and Grants team via email QH_fellowships@health.qld.gov.au. For information about how the Department protects your personal information, how to access or correct your own personal information, or how to make a complaint about a breach of the privacy principles and learn how we deal with such a complaint, please refer to the Department's [Privacy Policy](#).

4 Contractual arrangements

If successful, an Administering Organisation ('the Recipient') to which the funding is paid must be confirmed.

The Recipient must be a Queensland-based agency that has an Australian Business Number and is registered for GST. It must be a HHS, universities and research institutes. A University that is incorporated interstate but has a campus in Queensland is not considered a Queensland-based agency for the purposes of the Fellowship. There can be only one Recipient for each Fellowship.

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 its Schedules, including that research complies with relevant laws, guidelines and statements.

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.

Please note that the Agreement terms and conditions will not be negotiated or altered on an individual basis.

4.1 Dissemination and publicity

[Fellowship Awardees](#) must acknowledge the Queensland Government's funding in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Fellowship Awardees should actively promote their research, provide broad research information if required, and attend media/promotion events if requested.

It is expected that the Fellowship Awardees will make time available during the Fellowship duration to publicly present their research findings or other outputs to audiences including the Department, the Queensland public health system and external researchers.

Fellowship Awardees 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.

5 Glossary

Terms	Details
Fellowship	Fellowship refers to either of the two types of research Fellowships outlined in these Funding Guidelines.
Applicant	An Applicant is an individual who submits an application for funding under the Fellowship program in accordance with the eligibility criteria and requirements set out in these Funding Guidelines.
Clinician researchers	Clinician researchers include doctors, nurses, dentists, allied health practitioners, public health professionals and clinical scientists.
Review Panel	The Review Panel is a group of subject matter experts and other relevant representatives appointed by the Department to assess, score, and recommend applications for funding under the Fellowship program in accordance with the published assessment criteria.
Administering Organisation	An Administering Organisation is the organisation nominated by the Applicant to administer the Fellowship funding on their behalf. The Administering Organisation will enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department as the Fellowship Recipient and will be responsible for the financial, administrative, and contractual obligations of the Fellowship. The Administering Organisation can be the Applicant's employing HHS or partner organisation.
Active research participation	Active research participation includes conducting or contributing meaningfully to systematic and organised investigations and research projects on specific topics, undertaking coordinated research data collection or data analysis, leading or contributing to research and knowledge dissemination and translation into practice, authoring or contributing meaningfully to peer-reviewed publications. Generally, this does not include activities undertaken as part of a research higher degree (e.g. PhD).
Career disruption	A career disruption is a prolonged interruption to an Applicant's capacity to conduct research, for example, for 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 research career has been disrupted over the last ten years for a period of 90 days or more and provide a brief explanation of the reason in their application.
Fellowship Awardee	Fellowship Awardee refers to the Applicant whose application has been successful and has been approved by the Department for funding under the Fellowship.
Relative to opportunity	Applications will be assessed within a framework of 'relative to opportunity'. This approach recognises that researchers' achievements should be evaluated in the context of their opportunities to demonstrate research outputs

	and research productivity. Reviewers will consider the impact of any career interruptions or circumstances that may have affected research performance over the past five years. These may include (but are not limited to) significant academic, clinical responsibilities, parental or carers' leave, part-time employment, or industry placements. This ensures a fair and equitable assessment of track record and research contributions.
Salaried appointment	A salaried appointment is defined as holding a payroll number with, and being paid directly by, Queensland Health or other publicly funded healthcare facility. Applicants who hold formal conjoint appointments between a Queensland HHS and a Queensland research institution or university, including those where the academic partner is the employer, are eligible. Such Applicants need to provide confirmation in the relevant HHS letter of support confirming the HHS's financial contribution to the conjoint appointment and the clinical elements of the role. This criterion must be met at the time of application and applies for the duration of the Fellowship.

6 Further information

Frequently asked questions are available at

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/research-reports/research/researchers/grants-support/>

Further information or specific queries regarding the Fellowships, which are not covered in this document or the frequently asked questions document, should be directed, via the Administering Organisation (Recipient), to:

Health Services Evaluation, Research and Translation Branch
 Clinical Excellence Queensland
 Department of Health
 Email QH_Fellowships@health.qld.gov.au

Please direct all queries regarding eligibility to your Administering Organisation's research office or equivalent for advice, as the Department is unable to provide eligibility rulings to Applicants prior to the submission deadline. Research offices or equivalent may contact the Department for clarification of the Funding Guidelines on behalf of Applicants.