



ACT
Government

ACT Health

Research and Innovation Fund

Research and
Innovation Fund

Project Grant
Guidelines



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Research and Innovation Fund

Project Grant Outline

Opening Date	01 September 2020
Closing Date	01 December 2020
<i>In accordance with the provisions of Section 100(1) of the <u>Electoral Act 1992</u>, the ACT will hold a general election for the Legislative Assembly on Saturday, 17 October 2020. The caretaker period begins at 12:00am on 11 September 2020 and ends with the election of the Chief Minister on the first sitting day of the Legislative Assembly following the election. The continuation of the 2020-21 Research and Innovation Fund Grants following this general election is a decision for an incoming government. As a result, potential 2020-21 Research and Innovation Fund Grants applicants are advised that it is possible this grants program may not proceed.</i>	
Further advice about the application process can be received from:	email: RIF@act.gov.au

Executive Summary

The ACT Government \$3 million Research and Innovation Fund offers grants to develop research capacity and capability in key health areas that meet the health and wellbeing needs of the ACT community.

The main objective of the funding is to create a world-leading health research program to support the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care to the people of the ACT. The key message is that the ACT Government is delivering cutting-edge health care backed by clinical research to ensure that consumers of ACT Government health care receive the best care and achieve optimal health outcomes. Researchers should demonstrate in their proposals how they will achieve an effective impact on the health and wellbeing of Canberrans.

The merit of individual projects will be assessed against standard criteria by an independent panel. Panel members will be selected based on expertise in relevant research disciplines. The recommendations of the panel will be presented to the ACT Health Directorate Director-General for review and approval.

Introduction

Research and Innovation Fund Overview

The ACT Government, through the ACT Health Directorate's (ACTHD) Centre for Health and Medical Research (CHMR) has established the \$3 million Research and Innovation Fund (RIF) to deliver health research within the ACT. Funding will be available to support research projects within key health areas (see research priorities below). \$600,000 of the fund will be allocated to research in support of the [Australian Brain Cancer Mission](#).

The RIF will offer grants for individual projects of up to \$300,000 to support the development of research capacity and capability in key health areas to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the ACT community.

Objectives of the Fund

Funded projects should:

- promote cross-discipline collaboration and engagement; and
- lead to achievable and effective impacts on health outcomes beyond the life of the project.

Research Priorities

The current research priorities of the ACT Government are:

- support the Australian Brain Cancer Mission;
- cancer;
- dementia;
- palliative care;
- population health;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health;
- mental health;
- type 2 diabetes;
- cardiology;
- nursing;
- health of vulnerable populations, and
- women and children.

The above list is not an ordered list and there is no weighting assigned to the research priorities. The aim of the RIF is to build research capacity to support research which improves the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care to the people of the ACT.

Philosophy and Principles

The RIF will build research capacity within the ACT health system. To promote this aim, the RIF will be managed along the following guiding principles:

Building capability - proposals should demonstrate how the research will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project. While there are many ways to demonstrate that a project contributes to building research capacity within the ACT health system, projects that establish, or build on, collaborative partnerships will be viewed favourably.

Impact - the potential benefit of proposals will demonstrate that they address an area of research priority identified through a thorough review and demonstrated understanding of established literature and community need. Benefits can be defined as a single focus or affecting several areas, such as:

- improvement in health outcomes;
- knowledge and understanding of a particular condition or disease;
- better policy and decision-making;
- improved wellbeing measurements for the ACT community; and
- improved quality of life.

The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.

Impact considerations will also include the prospect of research supported by the Fund leading to high quality competitive research grant applications through other funding organisations.

Sustainability and transferability - proposals should demonstrate how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective impacts on health outcomes beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.

Community engagement - Funded proposals will demonstrate how potential outcomes are informed through community engagement in some, or all, of the following:

- conceptualisation, development and approval of the protocol;
- data collection and management; and
- analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.

Projects are expected to promote cross-discipline synergies and reflect the Government's focus on delivering excellent, person-centred health care across acute and community-based settings.

Research and Innovation Fund Governance

Funding Decisions

Building Research Capacity (\$1.4m) - to fund innovative projects that build research capacity in methods and data analytics that enable high quality research to be embedded in everyday healthcare, with research results readily translated into ongoing practice for individual patient care. Projects will be required to demonstrate outcomes within two years and must include partnerships or close collaboration with health service providers in the ACT.

Contributions will be made to existing and new projects led by established research teams based in the ACT (e.g. Canberra Hospital, Australian National University, University of Canberra). Support will be directed towards projects that help Canberrans to achieve optimal health outcomes.

Australian Brain Cancer Mission (\$0.6m) – for research into the role genomics plays in brain tumours.

All applications will be assessed using the same criteria (see below). Funding recommendations will be based on a review by an independent panel against standard criteria. The recommendations will be considered by the Director-General ACT Health Directorate for funding approval.

Funding decisions will be reported to the ACT Health and Well-Being Partnership Board and released through the ACTHD website. Funding for projects that support the Australian Brain Cancer Mission may also be advertised through Cancer Australia.

Individual project funding will not exceed more than \$300,000 per financial year. Individual projects of less than \$30,000 will not be considered. Project funding requests will not be supported for any goods or service listed as excluded.

Individual projects need align with the philosophy and principles and demonstrate:

- Alignment with priorities established within these guidelines;
- Anticipated impacts on patients and clients of the ACT health services;
- Translation of existing research and best practice processes into the ACT health system services; and
- Opportunities for inter discipline collaboration.

Funding for individual projects will be assessed on the following criteria:

- 20% Relevant expertise of the research team;
- 30% Quality of the research proposal measured against the expectations of the relevant research discipline;
- 30% Anticipated impact on patients and clients of the ACT health system services; and
- 20% Feasibility of the project delivering the anticipated impacts.

Research Impacts

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) considers four areas of impact for health-related research.

- Knowledge impact;
- Health impact;
- Economic impact; and
- Social impact.

Applications must address the anticipated outcomes of the proposed research in terms that are relevant to their area of interest and discipline and related to at least one of these four areas of impact. Examples of research outcomes that demonstrate impacts can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

In addition to the NHMRC impact areas, ACTHD also acknowledges that health related research can have positive cultural impact or be of cultural significance. Cultural impact will be considered as part of the assessment process.

Support for [developing best-practice models](#) in considering research impact are available from the University of Cambridge Research Strategy Office. Thinking about the impact that research will have during the design phase of the project will help focus the conduct of the research as it progresses.

Assessment of Applications

Administrative review - An initial administrative review of projects will be conducted by the CHMR. This review will consider:

- conformity with the published rules of the Fund; and
- identify potential synergies between applications.

Once vetted, applications will be provided to an independent panel for peer-review.

Peer review process - Consideration of the merit of individual projects will be conducted against the established criteria by an independent panel. The panel members will be selected based on expertise in relevant research disciplines. The recommendations of the panel will be presented to the ACTHD Director-General for approval.

Reporting - Successful applicants will be required to provide annual and final project reports to CHMR, as appropriate. All project reports will be presented to the Partnership Board and its associated Research Working Group.

ACT Government policy promotes open access to information inline with the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*. Final reports will be published on the ACT Health website to share learnings and to promote health research in the ACT. Where researchers believe that there is a legitimate reason not to publish the final report, agreement must be sought from the ACTHD Director-General.

Conflicts of Interest

A confidential register of interests will be held by the CHMR so that the interests of each person involved in the decision-making process can be considered during the project assessment process. The interest register will be considered as part of the assessment process for each application.

Each application is expected to include a statement of interests for each researcher as well as a statement on any additional funding received to support the project.

Funding Inclusions

Research supported through the Fund is not limited to clinical research or randomised control trials (CRT). The following research areas are examples of topics that should be considered to be within in scope for program:

- research into service delivery;
- research which supports evidence-based policy and guideline development;
- value-based healthcare;
- improvements in community and consumer engagement processes;
- translation of research findings into evidence-based improvements in clinical and therapeutic practices; and
- translation of existing research findings into innovative outcomes in other disciplines.

This is not expected to be a comprehensive list but merely to serve as a trigger for applicants to think more broadly about the definition of research and the impact that developing a strong evidence base can have on the community.

Funding Exclusions

The following items are out of scope of the funds arising from this program. Grant funds may not be used for:

- the purchase of capital equipment;
- tuition, or education fees;
- journal publication fees;
- the cost of publication preparation by external sources, such as professional editors and proof-readers;
- travel and associated expenses; and
- hospitality expenses.

While grant funds may not be used to pay for travel, they may be used to cover conference and seminar fees for the dissemination of project outcomes.

Funding Disbursement

Funding decisions will be made in accordance with the criteria set out in these guidelines. Funding decisions are reviewable but not subject to appeal. Applicants may request a review to ensure that due process was followed, and that procedural justice was afforded but decisions about funding individual projects may not be challenged.

In the event that a project was awarded funding following an improper process, that funding will be withdrawn and added to the allocation for the following grant round. Funds will not be reallocated to fund other projects from the existing round.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a project specific agreement in order to confirm their acceptance of the conditions of funding. Funds will not be released until relevant ethical approvals have been obtained. Details of funds management are specified in Appendix B. An exemplar project specific agreement is available for review with the grant application documents.

Reporting Obligations

Grant recipients are required to submit a report each financial year, as well as a final report, to the CHMR using the reporting templates provided. These reports will be provided to the Partnership Board for their information and comment if appropriate. Annual reports should be submitted using the template provided and in the format required.

All reports will be accompanied by a summary of financial management. Researchers may be asked for further, or supplementary information to improve understanding of the conduct or impact of projects.

Final Reporting

The Final Report template will consist of a one-page case study with the following headings:

Identification of the issue - What is it about this question that makes it a research question worth answering?

Development of the collaborative research team - document the research journey

Lessons learned - describe obstacles and barriers in the translation pathway and how these were overcome

Project impacts - communicate research translations, outcomes and impacts that are not currently being effectively communicated through other channels

Future avenues of development - Where might this research lead. That might be in terms of future research grant applications, or it might be ongoing relationship development, future opportunities, or measurably better outcomes for users of the ACT health system.

Final Report Development Stages

Researchers may find the following steps to develop a case study useful:

Stage 1: Planning the case study - Consider the format of the final report right from inception. Having in mind that this will be a key deliverable of the project will help researchers to ensure that the information needed to produce the report is easily available.

Stage 2: Engaging with case study partners - Ensure that collaborators have input into the production of the final report and that contributions are properly attributed. Engagement with communities and affected cohorts will ensure that their voice is represented in the final report.

Stage 3: Keeping a log of lessons - both positive and negative - Lessons learned during the course of the research project will help researchers to learn. Research is a considered engagement with risk. Not all research meets its intended outcomes. It is important that lessons are shared so that researchers have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others.

Stage 4: Fact and integrity checking - The Principal Researcher has responsibility to ensure that the report is factually correct and presents the research in a way that demonstrates integrity.

Stage 5: Publishing - Subject to approval of the ACTHD Director-General, final reports will be published on the ACT Health website to share learnings and to promote health research in the ACT. This is inline with the ACT Government's Open Access Information, *Freedom of Information Act 2016*.

Final reports will be used to promote health research within the ACT and to promote the Research and Innovation Fund. Researchers will be kept informed of the likely timing of publication.

Dissemination of Outcomes

Details of successful applications may be published on an internet page. Published details may include:

- the lay summary of the proposed research;
- the amount of funding awarded;
- the name of the investigative team; and
- their institutional affiliations.

Guidance on collecting evidence of research impact is available through several authoritative sources. This includes the [University of Cambridge](#), the [NHMRC](#), and from the [CSIRO](#). These sources are provided for guidance purposes only.

Researchers are encouraged to promote their research through presentations at conferences and seminars and through appropriate engagement with affected groups in a way that meaningfully engages in meaningful translation of outcomes. CHMR should be notified of any conference or seminar presentations arising from research funded through this program.

Journal style peer review or book chapter publications arising from grants received under the Fund must include an acknowledgement of the funding received. A copy of all publications from funded research should be provided to CHMR for inclusion on an internet page advertising outcomes from

the Fund. Where an electronic copy of the publication can not be provided for Intellectual Property, or other, reasons, a link to the final publication, or a meaningful abstract, should be provided.

Program Rules

Research Teams

Research Team Composition - research teams should be based in the ACT and are encouraged to include diverse partner institutional membership, such as:

- universities;
- health services;
- communities or consumer representatives;
- relevant industry partners;
- primary healthcare partners;
- other government departments; or
- non-government organisations.

In terms of collaboration, applications will only be considered that demonstrate close alliance with health service providers in the ACT (e.g. ACTHD, Canberra Health Services and Calvary) and community or consumer engagement. This collaboration does not require team membership, but that is encouraged. The application needs to clearly describe how this health service collaboration operates.

Any applicant may not be named as lead researcher on more than one application.

There is no restriction on the number of associate investigators on an application.

Research teams must reflect a cross-discipline approach to the conduct of research.

Affiliations - applications must declare the institutional affiliations for each member of the team.

Interest Declaration - a declaration of interests must be made for each member of the research team.

Additional Funding - applicants must declare any additional funding supporting the project and any conditions that funding places on the conduct of the research and dissemination of findings.

Research Intent

The intent of the program is to build research capability in key health areas.

Successful applications for funding must state how the project will deliver achievable and effective impacts on health outcomes beyond the life of the project through the translation of existing research into outcomes.

Conduct of Research

Ethical Standards - All research supported by this fund will obtain appropriate research ethics approvals and comply with all governance requirements.

Best-Practice - Research will be conducted in a manner which reflects best-practice relevant to the appropriate discipline. The Sax Institute provides a [framework for developing translational research projects](#) which may be of benefit for researchers when formulating projects.

Transparent Reporting of Trials - CONSORT (CONsolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) 2010 promotes transparency in the design and conduct of trials. The CONSORT 2010 guideline is intended to improve the reporting of parallel-group randomized controlled trial (RCT), enabling readers to understand the trial design, conduct, analysis and interpretation, to enable the assessment of the validity of results (<http://www.consort-statement.org/consort-2010>).

Research Integrity

All research supported through the Fund is expected to display:

- honesty in all aspects of research;
- rigour, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards;
- transparent and open communication; and
- care and respect for all participants in and subjects of research.

Researchers should be aware of their institutional research integrity policies. Researchers are expected to behave in a manner consistent with institutional policies.

All research must be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the 2018 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and any other relevant authoritative guidance material applicable to the subject matter.

Research Quality

Research projects funded under the Research and Innovation Fund are expected to be ethical by design and meet the standards of good research practice within the discipline most appropriate to the project methodology.

Research data will be managed in accordance with applicable state and territory legislation and ACTHD Data Governance guidelines.

Researchers are expected to abide by authoritative professional guidelines specific to their discipline. Research involving specific communities or vulnerable groups need to engage with these

cohorts in a manner which demonstrates respect and is in line with the expectations outlined in relevant guidance material listed in [Appendix C](#).

Research should be based on robust study design and deliver meaningful and supportable findings. In this regard, the Health Analytics Research Collaboration (HARC) is available to support researchers in appropriate methodological design. HARC is a collaboration between ACTHD, Services and academic partners focused on health data science, research methods and analytics in both qualitative and quantitative areas. It aims to:

- Drive high quality and efficient research and innovation;
- Strengthen strategic partnerships; and
- Accelerate translation of knowledge to practice and policy.

Engagement

The objectives of the Fund are to build research capability in key health areas and to translate existing research into outcomes designed to benefit end users of the health system. In order to promote these objectives, applications are expected to demonstrate engagement:

- Within ACTHD;
- health service providers;
- other institutions; and
- affected people and communities.

Research teams should ensure that their proposal does not duplicate previous research or work that is already underway.

Inter-institutional engagement - research teams should draw on external expertise where appropriate. This is particularly important with a view to capacity building within the ACTHD.

Community engagement - research teams will demonstrate engagement with groups and communities as appropriate to their project.

Outcomes

Research involves the testing of new ideas, approaches, and processes. The outcomes of projects supported by the Fund should be able to demonstrate that the process of conducting the research has resulted in an improvement of research capacity and capability. Examples of outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- skills transfer resulting in the implementation of novel or best-practice processes;
- demonstrated improvement in relations with difficult to engage cohorts of health service users;
- ongoing inter-institutional working arrangements;
- more productive use of health systems data;

- dissemination of outcomes to positively impact on users of the health system; or
- more efficient or effective service delivery.

Research outcomes that result in a final product, such as a demonstrated change in practice, will be well regarded. Research that results in an application for further funding through a nationally competitive research grant will also be well regarded.

Submission Guidelines

Grant applications will be received and managed through the SmartyGrants platform. The 2020-21 round will be hosted at: https://acthealth.smartygrants.com.au/RIF_2020-21. The link will be made live when the round opens. The submission guidelines will be published in a publicly available document. Annexed in the guidelines will be a submission template.

Grants applications must be submitted online via the SmartyGrants template and comply with the word limit restrictions set out in that template. Applications not complying with these restrictions will not be considered.

Constraints and Dependencies

Constraints

ID	Constraint
C1	The RIF commits \$0.600 million to the Brain Cancer Mission. This will support research into brain cancer that is consistent with the principles of the RIF

Dependencies

The success of the implementation will be dependent upon the items listed in the table below:

ID	Dependency
D1	Research and Innovation Fund Grant Application Template
D2	Research and Innovation Fund Project Grant Guidelines and Rules

Program Controls

Research Contracts

Each project supported by the Fund will be required to enter into a project specific agreement. A standard agreement will be developed in conjunction with the ACT Government Solicitor. This research agreement will be supplemented with project specific details as a schedule and signed by the principal researcher prior to the distribution of any funding.

Grants Management

Management of the round will be accessed through the SmartyGrants platform:

<https://manage.smartygrants.com.au/programs>

SmartyGrants will be used as the dissemination platform for all correspondence with researchers and applicants about grant submission, outcomes, finances, and management.

Financial

The principles of open and transparent governance will guide the development of all aspects of the Research and Innovation Fund. Details of funds management will be developed in collaboration with the Financial Reporting and Governance section.

Additional funding can be received into the cost centre for application against specific projects. Additional funding may be included to provide support for larger projects or as a demonstration of collaboration with other institutions or across the Directorate.

Salary recovery mechanisms can be employed to access expertise from other institutions as part of a collaborative approach to the delivery of research outcomes or to support secondment processes.

Escalation Procedures

In the event of serious issues arising during the implementation of the fund, the Director Research Strategy will escalate the matter to the Executive Director of Research for consideration and resolution.

In the event that the issue remains unresolved, the matter will be raised through a formal Minute to the ACTHD Director-General for resolution. The ACTHD Director-General may seek advice, including from Partnership Board members.

Appendix A: Glossary

Glossary	
Term	Description
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CHS	Canberra Health Services
ACTHD	ACT Health Directorate. The ACT Health Directorate (known as ACT Health) provides a comprehensive range of health services to the people of the ACT.
CIRH	Centre for Innovation in Rural Health
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council

Appendix B: Funds Management

The principles of open and transparent governance will guide the development of all aspects of the Research and Innovation Fund.

Details of funds management have been developed in collaboration with the Financial Reporting and Governance section. Funds will be disbursed on a purchase contract basis in line with the ACTHD Grant Administration Policy.

Successful applicants will be required to provide acquittal of expenditure as part of the annual reporting process. Expenditure of RIF money must be in line with the approved budget. A financial report will be required to accompany all annual and final reports.

Appendix C: References

Document	Location
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research
Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes-code
2018 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/research-integrity/2018-australian-code-responsible-conduct-research

ICH Guideline for Good Clinical Practice	https://www.tga.gov.au/publication/note-guidance-good-clinical-practice
Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS)	https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/guidelines-ethical-research-australian-indigenous-studies
Ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/research-policy/ethics/ethical-guidelines-research-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Principles (endorsed by AHMAC October 2006)	https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/b0b0b656-1e74-4dab-be65-507e035bd2fa/nagatsihid-data-principles.doc.aspx
Privacy Act	https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy-law/privacy-act/
National Privacy Principles	https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy-law/privacy-archive/privacy-resources-archive/national-privacy-principles
<i>Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997</i>	https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/1997-125/current/PDF/1997-125.PDF
Researching Right Way: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Ethics: A domestic and international review. October 2013	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Indigenous%20guidelines/evaluation-literature-review-atsi-research-ethics.pdf
Lowitja Institute key principles	https://www.lowitja.org.au/research
Ethical considerations in quality assurance and evaluation activities	https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/ethical-considerations-quality-assurance-and-evaluation-activities
The Concordat to Support Research Integrity	https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf

Appendix D: Related Documents

Document	Location
Confidential - Declarations Register	
Research and Innovation Fund Advice for Applicants	
Research and Innovation Fund Grants Project Grants Application Guidelines	
Research and Innovation Fund Grant Application Template	

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

ACT Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. ACT Health respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. ACT Health also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

For further accessibility information, visit: www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility

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