

Clinician Research Fellowships 2027

Guidelines

This document provides information about the application process, eligibility and conditions to apply for a Metro North Health Clinician Research Fellowship. All enquiries should be directed to Seán Ó Cinnéide, Research Grants Officer at MetroNorthResearch-Grants@health.qld.gov.au.

Overview

The Metro North Office of Research will award up to five (5) Fellowships (equivalent to 0.4 FTE for three years). The Fellowship will enable a clinician researcher to pursue a research career while maintaining an active clinical role, without having to transition to a full-time research fellowship.

Applications are invited from clinicians across all healthcare disciplines, including medical, nursing and midwifery, allied health, health sciences and dental health care professionals.

Background

Metro North Health is committed to fostering a visionary research culture that embraces novel approaches to diagnostics / therapeutics and systematically evaluates our clinical practice and the implementation of new knowledge to deliver world class health care.

Clinician researchers are uniquely positioned to identify research questions of direct relevance to patients and to lead high-quality research that improves health outcomes for patients and the wider community. The Metro North Research Strategy¹ sets out Metro North's commitment to developing integrated clinical and research career pathways that enable us to attract, develop and retain a world-class, research-active workforce.

Objectives

- Support excellent basic and applied research by clinician researchers who are embedded within Metro North Health.
- Promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways by attracting and retaining our most promising clinician researchers.
- Expand clinician-research capacity in a supportive and appropriately supervised, research-enabling environment.
- Enable capacity building and clinician-researcher mentoring, leadership and supervision capabilities.
- Support the career development of clinician researchers towards securing competitive research funding from national agencies and other funding sources.

¹ [Metro North Research Strategy 2023-2027](#)

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be employed with Metro North and appointed to a minimum of 0.2 FTE clinician duties for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Applicants must have an award of a Research Higher Degree (RHD) date within 10 years of 1 July 2027; **or** Demonstrate a research track record equivalent to less than ten years post-RHD.
Consideration/adjustment will be given for relevant career disruption (e.g. pregnancy, major illness, carer responsibilities etc. according to NHMRC guidelines). Clinician Research Fellowships are not to be used as a PhD Scholarship.
- Provide a proposal to develop and undertake a body of research aligned with the Metro North Research Strategy 2023-2027 to be undertaken at, or significantly associated with, Metro North Health facilities and/or directly involve Metro North Health patients and community.
- Where an applicant is an existing Metro North employee, they must include a signed letter of support from the relevant Head of Department with a commitment to support reduction of clinician duties by July 2027 (where required) and endorsement of the application.
Where the applicant is not currently a Metro North employee, they must demonstrate appropriate considerations for a future appointment as a *clinician* with Metro North Health.
- Have met research reporting requirements and demonstrated successful execution of any projects previously supported by Metro North Health grant funds.

Terms of Funding

- Fellows will be concurrently appointed to a temporary part-time position at the level of their substantive clinician appointment with the Metro North Office of Research (with remuneration excluding clinical related allowances and overtime).
- Fellows must be employed with Metro North Health and undertaking clinician duties (minimum 0.2 FTE) for the duration of the Fellowship. The total Metro North appointment may not exceed 1.0 FTE. The total concurrent employment arrangement with Metro North Health does not have to equate to 1.0 FTE
- Fellows must take up the appointment in July 2027, except where the Metro North Office of Research has granted special permission to do otherwise.
- The Fellow is responsible for ensuring that all research undertaken through the Fellowship has obtained all applicable ethics approvals, exemptions, governance authorisations and site-specific approvals prior to commencement.
- The Fellow will be responsible for demonstrating adherence to the research plan outlined in the approved application. Continuation of Fellowship funding is contingent upon successful progress toward completion of these activities and annual submission of a Progress Report.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in applications

In preparing their applications, applicants must comply with the NHMRC Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grant Applications and Peer Review.

Assessment

Assessment will be conducted in two stages.

Stage 1: Written application

Selection of the Fellow will include a written application submitted to Metro North Health via the SmartyGrants portal, comprising a research proposal outlining the research activities to be undertaken during the three-year Fellowship, specific milestones, deliverables and a budget detailing proposed expenditure of the grant funds.

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and alignment with the Fellowship objectives. Metro North Health reserve the right not to progress applications to assessment where these requirements are not met.

Applications will be assessed on:

1. **Research Program:** The research area, innovation, quality, feasibility and potential significance / impact of the project (40%)
2. **Track Record:** Research output, relative to opportunity, and demonstrated research leadership of the applicant (40%)
3. **Research Environment and Capacity Building:** Quality of the research environment, institutional and collaborative support, and the applicant's contribution to supervision, mentoring and research capacity building (20%)

Metro North Health is committed to creating pathways for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to develop their research skills and capacity. Strategic Metro North policy and workforce development objectives will be taken into consideration.

Metro North Health recognises the diversity of the communities that they serve. The Panel will include this consideration when ranking applications.

Stage 2: Interview

The highest ranked applicants will be invited for an interview where the applicant will verbally present their research plan, followed by discussion and questions from the panel.

Applicants are requested to invite their Head of Department, Clinical Supervisor or Executive delegate to attend where they will be asked to speak to the level of potential impact, project feasibility and support of the applicant.

The panel will rank the applicants based on both their written application and interview.

- Interview timeslots will be allocated and applicants are expected to be available at the requested time.
- Acceptance must be confirmed by return email. A request for a change in time only may be made. Requests are not guaranteed and will only be made subject to panel availability.
- Should an applicant decline or be unavailable to interview, they will not be eligible for the current round and the next-highest ranked applicant may be invited to interview.
- Attendance is required in-person. Under extenuating circumstances, provisions for tele/videoconference may be made. Please note, this does not include work roster conflicts or inability to travel between Metro North campuses.

How to Apply

Visit the Clinician Research Fellowship website: <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/research/grants/crf> and complete the online application form via the SmartyGrants platform.

Notes on application form

- The research plan must clearly outline:
 - the research activities you propose to undertake during the three-year Fellowship (linked to the milestones and timelines);
 - an intention to consolidate leadership in research and translational impact (e.g. advancing knowledge, publications, informing evidence-based decision-making; supporting knowledge/research translation, research capacity building of junior researchers and supporting a research active culture);
 - a strategy to develop competitive Tier 1 research funding applications beyond the 3-year fellowship.
- You are required to nominate at least one appropriately qualified Primary Supervisor/Mentor who will provide academic and/or clinical mentorship for the duration of the Fellowship. The Primary Supervisor/Mentor must outline their role and contribution to the Fellowship, provide a resumé, a signed letter of support and sign the certification page. The letter of support should outline a proposal for mentorship to support the Fellow to achieve their research career development plan. This should include activities to enhance research planning skills, navigating research pathways, grant writing, and funding applications during the Fellowship period.
- You may nominate a second appropriately qualified supervisor/mentor (recommended) who will also provide academic and/or clinical mentorship for the duration of the Fellowship. The Secondary Supervisor/Mentor must outline their role and contribution to the Fellowship, provide a resumé, and sign the certification page.
- You are required to provide a signed letter of support from your Head of Department. The letter of support must, at a minimum, outline the commitment to support your reduction in clinician duties, define how you will be supported to maintain at least the minimum (0.2 FTE) clinician duties, and delineate how you will integrate your research with clinical care. It must outline what supports will be available to you and provide an indication of the department and facility level support for this Fellowship application.
- An Executive Director is required to certify the application. In most instances, this will be the Executive Director of your primary facility, e.g. ED RBWH, ED Redcliffe Hospital etc. If you are unsure of who needs to sign this section and require further guidance, please contact the Research Grants Officer (contact details above).
- You may upload an alternative letter of support. This may be from within Metro North Health or it may be from an academic or industry partner. In all cases it must be pertinent and relevant to your Fellowship application.

It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure enough time is allowed for obtaining signatures taking into consideration public holidays and planned leave for delegates (i.e. allow enough time for the delegate to receive, review, sign and return the application to you using their usual administrative methods).

Late applications will not be accepted, including those awaiting certification/signatures.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant	Refers to the individual who is submitting the application.
Clinician	A health professional with a recognised tertiary degree, with eligibility for full registration with either the Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA), or membership or registration with a relevant professional body. This includes medical practitioners, nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives, allied health professionals, and clinical scientists. Refer to Metro North Nursing & Midwifery, Medical Services, or Allied Health for full details of all eligible professions.
Clinician Duties	Refers to those duties undertaken by the applicant in the course of their employment as a clinician. These duties may be directly related to patient care or may include non-clinical duties such as administrative or management specialisation, as distinguished from research or academic activities.
Clinician Researcher	A clinician with a research higher degree (RHD) OR who has a demonstrated research track record.
Fellow	For the purposes of this document, Fellow will refer to a successful Fellowship applicant.
Supervisor/Mentor	Refers to an individual nominated to supervise the Fellow whilst undertaking their clinician researcher duties. The supervisor/mentor must be appropriately qualified, with professional (clinical) and/or academic supervisory experience.
Research Higher Degree (RHD)	A postgraduate research higher degree completed at a university or recognised training institution. For the purposes of the Fellowships program, the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) is used, and will include: Level 10-Doctoral Degree (PhD); Level 10-Doctoral Degree (MD); Level 9-Masters Degree (Research).