



Western Australian
Future Health Research
& Innovation Fund

Research Excellence Awards 2022

Guidelines and Conditions

**Application Period Closes:
1:00pm (AWST), Monday 14 March 2022**

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1. Introduction

The Research Excellence Awards (REA) is a Program of the Western Australian (WA) [Future Health Research and Innovation \(FHRI\) Fund](#).

The FHRI Fund provides a secure source of funding to drive health and medical research, innovation and commercialisation and through these activities, improve the health and prosperity of all Western Australians. It also provides an opportunity to diversify the economy, create jobs, improve the sustainability of the health system and position WA as a leader in research and innovation.

This Program contributes to the following FHRI Fund Priorities:

- Target high-performing researchers in WA to maintain and/or advance the State's position as a leader in health and medical research.
- Support the development of early- and mid-career researchers, helping them to achieve an independent and self-sustaining career.

The expected outcomes are in alignment with the following objectives of the *Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012*:

- Advancing Western Australia to being, or maintaining Western Australia's position as, a national or international leader in research and innovation.

The Program is administered by the Research and Innovation Office (RIO), Western Australian Department of Health (Department of Health). Queries may be directed to RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Program is to recognise and support WA's most outstanding researchers by providing discretionary funding that can be applied strategically to research opportunities.

The expected outcomes of the REA Program include:

- improved efficiency and effectiveness of research projects
- improved knowledge distribution and commercialisation of research
- improved continuity of research programs
- increased success rate of competitive grant applications
- increased stability for research and technical staff.

3. Program description

The funding allocation for the REA 2022 Program is up to \$10 million over two years.

The REA Program provides grants to individual WA researchers who have demonstrated excellence over the three calendar years 2018-2020, as measured by eligible research grant income.

To ensure excellence is supported across career stages, the REA Program will award grants through the following two streams:

- **Stream One:** Early- and Mid-Career Researchers
- **Stream Two:** Established Researchers.

Applicants must select the appropriate stream and provide justification of this selection in the application form. The selected stream must then be endorsed by the administering

institution as being appropriate. Applicants and their administering institutions must refer to [Appendix A - Streams: Statements of Expectations](#) regarding the typical research experience and academic level expected for each stream and consider the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [Relative to Opportunity Policy](#) when undertaking this assessment and providing the justification and endorsement.

Up to 30 of the highest-performing eligible researchers in each stream will be awarded funding at one of four tiers, determined through eligible research grant income received by each applicant.

REA grants must be spent over a two-year period on costs directly related to nominated existing or proposed research project(s) as outlined in a Research Activity Proposal.

4. Eligibility

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this Program the following criteria apply:

- Applications must be submitted through a WA administering institution with a registered Australian Business Number.
- The applicant must:
 - be an Australian citizen or permanent resident in Australia
 - reside in Western Australia
 - be employed by the WA administering institution for the period of the grant
 - have no outstanding reports for any RIO or FHRI Fund grant funding programs from any years (excludes authorised extensions)
 - meet a criterion of 'excellence', which is demonstrated by the receipt of at least the following total [eligible research grant income](#) in the three calendar years 2018-2020:
 - **Stream One:** \$450,000
 - **Stream Two:** \$900,000.

Applications must be submitted in accordance with Section 6 [Application instructions](#).

RIO reserves the right to request further information and make final decisions on the eligibility of applicants.

Eligible research grant income

For the purposes of this Program the following criteria apply:

- Applicants must be named as a Chief or Principal Investigator on the research grant being claimed.
- The grant income must be (refer to [Eligible research grant income definitions](#)):
 - for health and/or medical research
 - provided on a nationally or internationally competitive basis
 - provided via a scheme that is nationally or internationally advertised and available to all potential applicants
 - provided via a scheme that has a well-defined mechanism for competition and selection by a qualified panel
 - received by a WA institution in the calendar years 2018-2020 and has been, or will be, directly expended through that WA institution on the relevant research, unless the 'new to WA' clause below applies.

Note: The WA institution may receive the income directly from a funding source or via another WA, national or international institution. Where the funds are not provided to the WA institution directly, the arrangements between the WA

institution and collaborating institutions must be made clear in either the original application or in the agreement between the funding body and the research institutions (such income would be considered to be shared income).

- If the applicant is 'new to WA', eligible research grant income received outside WA and expended on research outside WA may be claimed up to the end of the calendar year in which the applicant relocated to WA, at a 50% reduced rate.
- If multiple WA Chief/Principal Investigators are named on a grant for which the income is being claimed by applicant(s), it is the responsibility of the applicant(s) and administering institutions to ensure that the agreed portion to be claimed by each WA Chief/Principal Investigator for REA purposes (even if nil) is documented and that income is not double counted. These records are to be held by the administering institutions and RIO reserves the right to undertake audits.

REA applicants and institutions where eligible research grant income is received must certify that the research grant income meets all of the above criteria.

RIO reserves the right to request external audits of submitted income at any time.

Eligible research grant income definitions

Health and medical research

For the purposes of the FHRI Fund, health and medical research is inclusive of:

- research to understand human health, wellbeing and disease, and the biological, behavioural, social and environmental factors that contribute to these
- research to measure the magnitude and distribution of a health problem
- research to develop solutions, interventions, products and technologies that could contribute to improving human health and wellbeing
- research to understand how interventions, policies and programs aimed at improving human health and wellbeing can be most effectively delivered.

Nationally/internationally competitive

Every application submitted for funding in a selection process must be assessed and rated against all other applications submitted in that selection process. Projects funded as a result of a direct approach from a funding body would not be considered as competitive.

Nationally/internationally advertised

All potential applicants must be given an equal opportunity to become aware of and apply to the scheme through the use of any combination of direct contact; newspapers; journals; magazines; internet; or any other printed or electronic media.

Available to all potential applicants

There must not be preferential treatment of any applicant during the assessment process based solely on the type of institution nor its geographical location. Each potential applicant must have an equal chance to submit an application.

Scheme

A scheme is an administrative process that allocates funds using a discrete set of rules. Schemes can include grants and programs.

Well-defined mechanism for competition

The scheme has publicly available selection criteria against which all applications are assessed. The scheme has publicly available rules stating how assessments are conducted, including provisions to manage conflicts of interest which are binding on the selection panel.

Selection by a qualified panel

All scheme applications are assessed and rated by a panel with the collective expertise and experience to effectively assess applications against all selection criteria for that scheme.

5. Program funding

Up to \$5 million is available for each stream over two years. The indicative REA grant amounts that will apply for each stream are set out in the table below, but may be varied if fewer than 30 eligible applications are received in each stream:

Tier	Ranking (quantum of eligible research grant income)	Grant amount (over two years)	Total funding per stream
1	1 – 5	\$300,000	\$1,500,000
2	6 – 10	\$200,000	\$1,000,000
3	11 – 20	\$150,000	\$1,500,000
4	21 – 30	\$100,000	\$1,000,000
			\$5,000,000

Funding will be provided to the administering institution of successful applicants. Before funding may be released by the administering institution to a researcher, a Research Activity Proposal for the use of funds must be submitted to and accepted by RIO. This must occur within one month of Grant Funding Agreement execution unless an extension is approved by RIO. A template for the Research Activity Proposal will be provided by RIO to successful applicants (See Section 8 [Research Activity Proposal](#)).

Funding will only be made available for the activities described in the Research Activity Proposal, or with any modifications approved by RIO. The Department of Health is not obliged to underwrite any recurrent or capital costs beyond the funding awarded through this Program.

Funding is offered subject to FHRI Fund budget availability, which could be varied in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

6. Application instructions

The instructions below must be followed when making a submission:

- The Application Form available from the [FHRI Fund website](#) must be utilised.
- The Application Form must be typed in Arial font 11 point or larger.
- Applicants must submit their applications through the administering institution grant administration office and are responsible for checking for internal deadlines.
- Electronic signatures are acceptable. The onus is on the applicant to ensure approval to use an electronic signature has been obtained.
- The application form is to be emailed to RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au by the administering institution as a **single** Adobe Acrobat PDF or Microsoft Word file, not exceeding 2MBs. The Grant Income Spreadsheet should be emailed as an excel file attachment. The application email subject line should be titled as follows:
Applicant SURNAME, First name – REA 2022
e.g. SMITH, John – REA 2022.
- Applications must be complete, include requested certifications and submitted by the closing date/time.

Acknowledgment of receipt of application will be provided via email to the administering institution and applicant within five working days of the closing date.

Queries regarding the application process should be directed by email to RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au.

7. Contractual arrangements

Grant Funding Agreement

Grants to entities external to the WA public health system are offered in accordance with the Department of Health Grant Funding Agreement (and its Terms and Conditions) which is a legal agreement between the Department of Health and the administering institution. Within the WA public health system, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be entered into.

Where research is a component of the activity, this must be conducted in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#), and must have any required ethics and governance approvals.

The Department of Health reserves the right to withdraw an offer of grant to the administering Institution if the Grant Funding Agreement and/or Grant Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions, or MOU, cannot be agreed between the parties.

Insurance

The administering institution will be required to demonstrate appropriate levels of insurance as a condition of the Grant Funding Agreement.

Note that recipients who require site governance approval will also be required to demonstrate appropriate levels of insurance during this process, which may vary depending on the site.

Intellectual property

Intellectual Property (IP) that arises out of the project will vest with the administering institution. However, consideration will be given to the provisions of the [Western Australian Government Intellectual Property Policy 2015](#), that IP rights should be allocated to optimise the economic, social or environmental benefits for WA from the use, commercialisation and disposal of the IP.

The administering institution must establish appropriate sub-agreements with any participating organisations.

When a research team involves more than one institution and includes a member from the WA public health system, then the IP agreement must be authorised by the relevant WA public health system entity and the administering institution.

Any questions regarding such IP matters should, in the first instance, be directed to RIO (RIO.DOH@health.wa.gov.au).

Requests for variation

Approval for variations to the Grant Funding Agreement such as, timing and duration, administering institution, approved expenditure, will be at the discretion of the Department of Health. If variations are not approved this could result in termination of the grant with associated funding reverting to, or being recoverable by, the Department of Health.

8. Research Activity Proposal

Successful applicants will be advised of their grant amount and invited to submit a Research Activity Proposal which must be submitted to RIO within one month of execution of the Grant Funding Agreement. The proposed research activities must not duplicate research previously or currently being funded.

The Research Activity Proposal must outline the proposed research activities, and for each of these the:

- the associated existing and/or proposed research project(s)
- milestones and timeframes for the activity
- the expected outcomes (as defined in Section 2 [Purpose](#))
- the proposed expenditure.

Expenditure items are required to:

- be integral to achieving the objectives and outcomes of the nominated research activity
- be directly related to the nominated research activity
- not be for a facility or an administrative cost that would be provided by an institution in the normal course of undertaking and supporting health and medical research.

Examples of included expenditure items

- Salaries and salary on-costs for research and technical personnel¹, providing the salary is not already provided for in another grant. Salary support for specified personnel must not exceed 100% across all FHRI Fund/Department of Health grants held.
- Postgraduate research student stipends
- Research consumables
- Experimental animals (excluding animal holding and breeding facilities)
- Research services, such as analysis of samples, DNA, sequencing, etc.
- Research equipment, including equipment access fees
- Accessing data collections
- Costs incurred in supporting research translation/implementation such as health economic analyses, evaluations, training, stakeholder engagement etc.
- Provisional patents
- Publication fees
- Consumer engagement costs
- Travel costs directly related to a research project (including conference costs, fares, accommodation, travel allowances, field work expenses).

The Researcher can propose to use funding for items not contained in [Examples of included expenditure items](#), provided they meet the expenditure item requirements that are listed above.

It is intended that funds will be spent in WA only. An exception to this may be considered in the case where specific expertise or equipment is required and is not available in WA.

¹ REA grants are not intended to provide salary support for recipients. However, successful applicants to Stream 1 (Early- and Mid-Career Researchers) may request an exemption from this rule in their Research Activity Proposal. Adequate justification must be provided. Determination of exemptions will be made on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of RIO.

When this situation occurs, adequate justification must be provided in the Research Activity Proposal.

Some activity items proposed by the Researcher may require or benefit from consumer involvement. In such cases, the Research Activity Proposal should demonstrate the inclusion of consumers and the community, in line with Section 9 [Consumer involvement](#).

RIO reserves the right to require the Research Activity Proposal to be revised and resubmitted and the right to reduce the REA grant amount and recover funding in circumstances where the expenditure proposed is less than the grant amount awarded.

9. Consumer involvement

In line with the NHMRC definition, consumers are people who have lived experience of a health issue. They include patients, their friends, families, carers and members of the general public. Consumers can also be people who represent the views and interests of a consumer organisation, a community or a wider constituency.

There is increasing recognition of the benefits of involving consumers in the research and innovation process. Effective consumer involvement can ensure research and innovation is relevant to the WA community and improves the uptake of findings.

Researchers should engage with health consumers during both the development of a research proposal and for the ongoing research activity(ies) by including them in the research team where appropriate.

Consumer involvement should incorporate:

- Clearly defined relationships with health consumers or community groups who have 'lived experience' of the research project issue being investigated
- Demonstrated understanding of the benefits derived from involving people with a lived experience in research
- Inclusion of consumers in the research team where appropriate
- Plans to involve consumers in the project throughout the research timeline
- Budget strategy with funds allocated to support, implement and acknowledge consumer involvement (e.g. stakeholder training opportunities, honoraria and payments, additional time to support involvement activities, administration support and consultations and events associated with involvement activities).

Guidance on consumer involvement can be found at the [Consumer and Community Involvement Program](#) website and the [NHMRC's Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research 2016](#).

10. Approvals and agreements

Research ethics and research governance

The administering institution, and any participating entity, will be responsible for obtaining any research ethics and governance approvals that might be required for undertaking funded activities.

Research ethics approvals must be obtained from appropriate ethics committees (human and/or animal). Research governance authorisation (also known as site specific authorisation) must be obtained from each relevant institution/site conducting the project or providing access to data, participants or tissue samples.

For information on research ethics and governance submission requirements for the WA public health system please refer to the following websites: [Research Ethics](#); [Research Governance](#); [Multi-centre Research](#).

Use of data collections

A project that requires access to a WA public health system data collection requires review and approval for this access in accordance with the [Health Services Act 2016](#) and the [Health Services \(Information\) Regulations 2017](#). In addition to research ethics and governance approval, accessing these data may include feasibility assessment and approval for data release. Preliminary cost and time estimates should be included in the Research Activity Proposal.

If the use of Department of Health data collections is proposed please review the [Research Data Services website](#) and contact the [Research Data Services Team](#).

Should your application for funding be successful, we recommend you immediately begin the request and approval process.

11. Funding conditions

Payment instalments

Grants will be provided in two instalments to the administering institution as follows:

- The first instalment will be subject to execution of a Grant Funding Agreement.
- The second (and final) instalment will be provided at the mid-point of the grant (1 year).

The administering institution is responsible for administering the funds, including the appropriate release of the funds to the researcher to conduct the activity as follows:

- The first instalment may be released to the researcher only once:
 - the administering institution is notified that the Research Activity Proposal has been accepted by RIO
 - if required, all relevant ethics and institutional governance requirements for the research activities have been met (refer to Section 10 [Research ethics and research governance](#)).
- The second instalment may be released to the researcher on advice from RIO that a satisfactory mid-point Progress Report has been received.

Partial payment or suspension of funds

The Department of Health reserves the right to:

- provide funding instalments in parts based on milestone achievement to date and risk assessment of future milestones
- suspend payment of funding instalments or part instalments where activity feasibility has become uncertain.

Termination of funds

Funds shall revert to, or be recoverable by, the Department of Health in instances where:

- eligible research grant income was incorrectly claimed in the application form
- the Research Activity Proposal is not submitted to RIO within one month of executing the Grant Funding Agreement, unless RIO approves an extension
- the recipient relocates and is no longer a resident in WA

- the recipient is no longer employed by the WA administering institution
- the funding is terminated by RIO as a result of insufficient progress being made at the time of Progress Reports or any interim Progress Report, a request for variation is not approved or it has been otherwise determined by either the recipient or RIO that the activity is no longer viable
- the recipient is successful in obtaining funding for the approved expenditure from another source
- funds are used for purposes other than those for which they were awarded
- funds were spent on activities that require ethics and/or governance approvals and such approvals were not obtained before undertaking the activities
- funds are not released by the administering institution to the researcher due to failure to comply with the funding conditions
- funds are not fully spent at the conclusion of the grant period (including any extensions approved by RIO)
- the recipient(s) of funding is found to have provided dishonest or false information.

12. Reporting

The grant recipient and administering institution are responsible for meeting reporting requirements over the duration of the grant period and at its conclusion.

All reports are to be completed on template forms provided by RIO.

Progress Reports

A report outlining progress against the Research Activity Proposal and expenditure to date is required at the mid-point of the grant (1 year).

RIO reserves the right to request additional Progress Reports at any point during a grant.

RIO reserves the right to suspend or withdraw funding where insufficient progress has been made.

Final Report

A Final Report detailing the funded activities and outcomes is to be submitted to RIO at the conclusion of the funding period. Failure to submit the final report at this time may render the recipient ineligible for further funding from the FHRI Fund and RIO until the Final Report is received.

Financial Acquittal Statement

An acquittal statement outlining the expenditure of funds must be submitted to RIO at the conclusion of the funding period. Acquittal statements must be certified by an authorised finance officer at the administering institution.

RIO reserves the right to request interim acquittal statements at any stage during the funding period.

Any unexpended funds must be returned to the Department of Health. Any over-expenditure is the responsibility of the administering institution and no claim may be made against the Department of Health.

13. Acknowledgements

The Minister for Health and/or the Department of Health will publicly announce recipients. All other parties must withhold announcement/media coverage until after this has occurred. The embargo on publicity will stand until RIO advises it has been lifted.

Acknowledgment of FHRI Fund support should be made as opportunities arise in publications, conference presentations, public discussion, press statements etc, as appropriate. The preferred citation is: "This work is/has been supported by the Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund, which is an initiative of the WA State Government".

14. Complaints

Applicants who feel that their interests have been adversely affected by an action taken by RIO in administering a funding round may lodge a complaint. Complaints can only be considered when they refer to the administrative process and not to the funding decision. Complaints must be submitted via email (marked Confidential) to:

Executive Director, Clinical Leadership and Reform
CLR.CED@health.wa.gov.au

15. Confidentiality

Plain language summaries and funding applicant/recipient statements provided on applications or reports may be used for publicity purposes as stated on the relevant templates.

All other information provided in applications and reports will be maintained confidentially by RIO. If requests are received by RIO to make public any aspect of the application, other than the plain language summaries, the authorisation of the administering institution will be sought.

Applicants are advised that the Department of Health is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*. This provides a general right of access to records held by State Government agencies. In addition, information pertaining to the receipt of State Government financial assistance may be tabled in the Parliament of Western Australia.

16. Publications

Funding recipients are requested to forward copies of publications resulting from the funded activity to RIO. In order to maximise knowledge exchange, funding recipients are asked to comply with the NHMRC's 'Publication and dissemination of research: a guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research', which can be downloaded from the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) page.

17. Evaluation

RIO will evaluate the Research Excellence Awards and funding recipients and administering institutions will be required to contribute to this.

Appendix A – Streams: Statements of expectations

For the purposes of this Program, assessment of suitability for Stream One or Stream Two is based on the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [Investigator Grants 2021](#) Peer Review Guidelines (Appendix H Statement of Expectations) as follows:

- **Stream One: Early- and Mid-Career Researchers** - applicants who align with Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1) or Level 2 (EL2) as per the expectations provided below.
- **Stream Two: Established Researchers** - applicants who align with Leadership Level 1 (L1) or above as per the expectations provided below.

Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)

It is expected that EL1 Investigator Grant recipients will typically be between **0 and 5 years post-PhD** (or equivalent) and will be beginning to gain recognition in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contribution(s) in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception of research projects
- scientific contributions within their region, state or territory (e.g. community leadership, state level contribution to a professional society)
- limited but developing supervision of research staff and students
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

It is also expected that Emerging Leadership applicants will be working within a larger team under the mentorship of more senior researchers.

Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)

It is expected that EL2 Investigator Grant recipients will typically be between **5 and 10 years post-PhD** (or equivalent) and appointable at **Academic Level B (or equivalent)**, and be recognised for their expertise in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions of influence in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception and direction of research projects, while developing independence
- experience in supervising a small research team
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, community leadership, peer review and professional societies)
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

It is also expected that Emerging Leadership applicants will be working within a larger team under the mentorship of more senior researchers

Leadership Level 1 (L1)

It is expected that L1 Investigator Grant recipients will typically be **between 10 and 15 years post-PhD** (or equivalent), and appointable at Academic Level C or D (or equivalent) and be national authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research, the health system, economy and/or the health of the population
- ability to independently conceive and direct research programs, coordinate a team

- of researchers and generate national collaborations
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, peer review, research advisory boards or professional societies)
- supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers
- contribution(s) within their department, centre, institute or organisation that extend beyond their research e.g. membership of regulatory or management committees.

Leadership Level 2 (L2)

It is expected that L2 Investigator Grant recipients will be **15 - ≤20 years post-PhD** (or equivalent), typically appointable at Academic Levels D or C (or equivalent) and be leading national and rising international authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- substantial and original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research, the health system, economy and/or the health of the population
- experience in leading an independent research program(s) involving national collaborative networks
- national and possibly international contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. research advisory boards, peer review)
- supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers

leadership roles within their department, centre, institution or organisation that extend beyond their research.

Leadership Level 3 (L3)

It is expected that L3 Investigator Grant recipients will be **≥20 years post-PhD** (or equivalent), typically appointable at Academic Level E or D and be leading international authorities in their research area with demonstrated:

- significant original contributions of major importance that have had a positive impact on health and medical research, the health system, economy and/or the health of the population
- experience in leading a major independent research program(s) involving national and international collaborative networks
- national and international contributions through leadership in their scientific discipline (e.g. in research policy and on advisory committees)
- extensive supervision, mentoring and promotion of early and mid-career researchers
- significant leadership roles within their department, centre, institution or organisation, that extend beyond their research.



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