



Cancer Council WA

Early Career Investigator Guidelines to Applicants

Guidelines to Applicants applying for ECI Funding

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Closing Date for applications: 22 August 2022

1. Introduction

Cancer Council Western Australia aims to minimise the effect of cancer on our community through research and education and by providing people affected by cancer with support to enhance their quality of life. A key objective of Cancer Council WA is to encourage and support a wide range of research activities into the causes, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer.

Our Research Funding Program aims to support cancer researchers at each step of their career and development and retain world class cancer researchers in Western Australia.

Through a competitive application ranking process, Cancer Council WA's Early Career Investigator Grants, provide funding for early career biomedical, clinical and health researchers who are considered to have the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of cancer research in Western Australia.

The Early Career Investigator Grants offered by Cancer Council WA are highly sought after and extremely competitive.

Cancer Council WA is calling for applications from qualified early career researchers to apply for the Suzanne Cavanagh Early Career Investigator Grants commencing in 2023 in the fields of laboratory, clinical, health services, epidemiological, psychosocial and behavioural science.

2. Grant Description

The Early Career Investigator Grant objectives are:

- to assist talented Early Career Investigators to develop and advance their career in cancer related research,
- to enhance the skills and track record necessary to become competitive in national research grant processes.

The Suzanne Cavanagh Early Career Investigator (ECI) Grants of up to \$35,000 are offered to researchers with no more than 5 years postdoctoral experience.

3. Eligibility

The Cancer Council WA's Early Career Investigator Grant applications can be applied to any legitimate area of cancer research related to the causes, diagnosis, treatment and/or prevention of cancer. In circumstances where the applicant's main area of activity has not clearly been cancer-related, a case will need to be made providing evidence of a link with cancer.

Applications will be accepted from researchers working in, or affiliated with, publicly funded established Higher Education and/or Medical Research Institutions within Western Australia.

The institution nominated to administer the grant ie the Administering Institution, must be an NHMRC Approved Administering Institution¹ in WA.

The majority of the research work (assessed as 75% or more) should be conducted in or through legitimate Western Australian Higher Education and/or Medical Research Institutions. This does not preclude funding the Western Australian component of a project involving interstate or international collaboration.

Applicants must hold Australian citizenship, permanent residency or an appropriate visa to work in Australia. Applicants who do not hold Australian Citizenship or permanent residency must have their primary residence in Western Australia and be employed by a WA research institution for the duration of the grant, including holding a relevant visa. In the event that a successful applicant no longer complies with these requirements Cancer Council WA reserves the right to cease payment of funding.

Applicants must be early career researchers as defined by the following Cancer Council WA criteria:

- A letter advising the PhD thesis was passed and is dated later than 30 June 2017.
- Applicants to be full college fellows at the time of application, holding a certificate with an admission date later than 30 June 2017 confirming the applicant is a 'Full College Fellow/s' i.e., FRACP, FRAPAL etc
- Candidates without a PhD (or equivalent) are eligible to apply if they have submitted their PhD or are within three months of handing in the final submission of their thesis at the time of the application deadline. You will need to make a strong case based on your track record (publications, previous awards, grants) and provide a statement from your supervisor supporting your claim of eligibility. An award would be conditional on the PhD being awarded in the year the fellowship is offered.

Note: Research experience (without a PhD)² and career disruptions³ are a consideration for this funding.

The applicant should be supported by funding from an additional agency or have existing research grant funding. There is no minimum contribution from external (institutional or other granting body) sources.

The applicant may only submit one application to the current round. Several ECI's may apply for an ECI grant as joint CIs. Senior researchers may be named as Associate Investigators. The track record of Associate Investigators will be a relatively minor consideration in the assessment of ECI Grants.

¹ file://shpfpr01/HOME/anankiveII/Downloads/20220405_nhmrc_administering_institutions_list.pdf

² Researchers who have relevant research experience but do not have a PhD and/or are not a full college fellow will have their eligibility assessed on a case-by-case basis. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility please contact us on 9388 4328 or CancerCouncilWA.Research@cancerwa.asn.au

³ Extensions to the 5-year limit apply for **career disruptions**. Career disruption includes pregnancy; major illness; and carer responsibilities including parental leave. This is guided by the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy, Appendix B in the Investigator Grants 2021 Guidelines: www.mq.edu.au/research/research-funding-and-grant-opportunities/fellowship-and-grant-opportunities/nhmrc/nhmrc-investigator-grants/Investigator-Grants-2021-Guidelines-v2.0.pdf

Applicants are ineligible to apply if they have been:

- A previous recipient of a Cancer Council WA Early Career Investigator Grant,
- A CIA on a Cancer Council WA Project Grant (using the NHMRC application process),
- A CI (CIA, CIB, CIC, ...) on a NHMRC, Australian Research Council (ARC) or similar standard grant of an amount greater than \$100,000 (this does not include fellowships).

Applications may involve a single institution, or two or more acting in collaboration. In the second instance, one of the institutions must be specified as the lead institution which will receive the grant and administer the Grant.

The Tobacco and Other Industries

The Cancer Council will not provide a research grant to any researcher who is an applicant for or is in receipt of funds from:

- I. Companies or other entities receiving money or revenues from the tobacco industry or having arrangements or dealings with the tobacco industry in which may actually, potentially or perceivably compromise tobacco control initiatives. This includes:
 - a) Tobacco manufacturers or wholesalers, and their subsidiaries or other entities within that group of companies;
 - b) Entities or individuals whose sole or principal business is the retailing of tobacco products;
 - c) Other entities identified to have links of a commercial, strategic or public nature with tobacco manufacturers or wholesalers
- II. Companies or other entities involved in manufacturing, distribution, promotion or sale of any other product or service known to cause cancer or to increase cancer risk (including, but not limited to, solaria, asbestos, alcohol, environmental carcinogens, sugared beverages, and other energy dense nutrient poor foods).

Cancer Council WA will terminate its support for a research project if the above provisions relating to support from these industries are breached or it believes that the integrity of the research is threatened by influence from tobacco or other interests.

Researchers in receipt of funds from other organisations in conflict with the prevention of cancer will be examined closely to determine if a conflict of interest exists.

4. Application Process

A full application is invited from all interested candidates. Applications are to be submitted through the Cancer Council WA's online portal.

Before sending your application, please ensure all sections have been completed as specified, including the required sign-off in the certification section. A guide to completing you application online is available [here](#)

Timetable

Stage	Date
Applications Open	13 July 2022
Deadline for submission of Application	22 August 2022
Outcome notification	December

5. Guidance on completing the application

The application should describe the achievements of the applicant and the program of research to be undertaken. Failure to address all the following criteria in a fully detailed submission may result in the application being rejected on the grounds of insufficient information.

Personnel

- a) An ECI Grant cannot be used to fund the salary of the Applicant and may be used to employ a research assistant. ECI Grants are intended to support work for which the applicants already have or will have support within their respective administering institutions – Cancer Council WA does not fully fund programs of research.
- b) Grant-supported personnel will be employees of the institution(s) in which the research is carried out and will be subject to the conditions of employment of those institutions.

Equipment

- c) ECI Grants may be used to purchase equipment for a specified research project. The Administering Institution to which the equipment is entrusted must undertake to maintain purchased equipment in good working condition and in the location where the sponsored research project is being undertaken. Equipment bought with ECI Grant funds remain part of the project. When the project is satisfactorily completed, the equipment may become the property of the Administering Institution.

Direct and Indirect Research Costs

- d) Support for direct research costs, such as postage, phone/fax, printing, stationery, computer hardware and software, can be included.
- e) Funds will not be provided to cover overhead costs levied by the Administering Institution. Specifically, the indirect costs of research; or research infrastructure; or institutional overheads and administrative charges levied to pay for institutional research and general infrastructure.

Community Review

- f) The Community Review section of the application is very important and will form part of the assessment of your application so please read the **Guidance on community review criteria document which is available on the website.**

Other

- g) Multidisciplinary applications spanning research other than that specifically related to cancer may be considered if the majority of the research relates to cancer control.
- h) Recent entrants to the cancer research field should feel confident that applications will be carefully considered and assessed on their merits.
- i) Applications for a project which has attracted additional funding from other sources are welcomed where the total size of the project is still achievable within the 12 month timeframe. Projects which have secured much larger amounts of funding will be deemed to be outside the scope of these awards and will not be considered. If you are unsure about your particular circumstances, please contact Cancer Council WA for clarification.
- j) The application should include a summary of all input from the host institution including cash, buildings, laboratory space, technical support, etc.
- k) Do not include GST in your final budget. Grant funding is exclusive of GST.

6. Selection Criteria

The applications are sent to our Postdoctoral Research Grants Advisory Subcommittee for external peer review. The subcommittee consists of c.7 WA cancer researchers and up to 4 community representatives who have a personal connection to cancer. As with most of our funding opportunities there is a scientific assessment (criteria below) and a community assessment, with a scoring allocation of 70:30 respectively.

For more information on our committee, please visit our website.

It should be noted that:

- a) Applications falling outside of Cancer Council WA's remit will be rejected. Negotiations will not be entered into.
- b) Due to increasing competition for cancer research funding, Cancer Council WA will scrutinize and consider other sources of support that may be available for the proposed research. Applicants accepting an offer of funding from other funding bodies should notify the Cancer Council immediately.
- c) Cancer Council WA sometime receives funds for research to which a donor has attached a specific priority, including but not limited to: tumour type and disadvantaged groups. In any application round, we reserve the right to award these funds to additional applications that fit the specified priority and have been assessed and deemed fundable by the Subcommittee.
- d) Applicants may be invited to attend an interview to further examine the proposals under consideration. During the assessment process, we may also seek input from third parties if deemed necessary.

Cancer Council WA has the right to make the final decision over which research it funds. This may include making no award or awarding part of the total funding pool.

Scientific Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following scientific criteria:

- a) Strategic relevance (25%): innovation and originality (5%); impact on cancer (5%); relevance to cancer control in WA (5%); current contributions to the research environment in WA (5%); and collaboration (5%).
- b) Scientific quality (50%): research design (30%); and feasibility (20%).
- c) Track record, relative to opportunity⁴ (25%).

Community Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following community criteria:

- d) The following criteria will be assessed: plain language summary; research outcomes and the extent of potential benefit (impact); and pathway for realising the benefit (translation); equity; and community / consumer engagement.

⁴ Circumstances considered under "relative to opportunity" include: amount of time spent as an active researcher; career disruption (see Eligibility); available resources, including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities; building relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods and subsequent impact on track record and productivity; clinical, administrative or teaching workload; relocation of an applicant and their research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity; for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including 'sorry business'; the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question; research outputs and productivity noting time spent employed in other sectors, e.g., there might be a reduction in publications when employed in sectors such as industry or having carer responsibilities (that do not come under career disruption, p 2).

This is guided by the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy, Appendix B in the Investigator Grants 2021 Guidelines: www.mq.edu.au/research/research-funding-and-grant-opportunities/fellowship-and-grant-opportunities/nhmrc/nhmrc-investigator-grants/Investigator-Grants-2021-Guidelines-v2.0.pdf

- e) How this criterion is addressed is very important and can have a significant impact on application rankings. For information on the Community Review Criteria, refer to the *Guidance on Community Review criteria*.

7. Obligations of ECI grant recipients & Administering Institution

Administering Institution

- a) There will be only one administering institution for each awarded grant.
- b) Cancer Council WA will make payments to the Administering Institution nominated by the successful application. Payments are made within the terms and conditions specified in the grant offer, and in which the Administering Institution will be held responsible for the proper administration and expenditure of the grant and for ensuring that all reports required by the Cancer Council WA are provided on time.
- c) The Administering Institution also guarantees that the infrastructure necessary to support the research will be available and will undertake to meet from other than the grant funds all infrastructure costs pertaining to the work supported by the grant. Its explicit support for and commitment to the application is therefore essential before any application can be considered. The Administering Institution of applicants accepting an offer of funding from other funding bodies for this research should notify Cancer Council WA immediately.

Publicity and Acknowledgment

The ability of Cancer Council WA to fund research is dependent entirely on its ability to raise money through public donation. Public awareness of the Cancer Council's role in funding research, particularly successful research, is therefore crucial.

- d) Where a media release or conference is planned, it is the responsibility of both the recipient and the Administering Institution's media office to give Cancer Council WA adequate notice of the release or organisation of the conference, and to accommodate reasonable requests for participation in the publicity.
- e) In addition, researchers may be called on to participate in Cancer Council WA's promotional initiatives such as presentations to major donors and the preparation of promotional materials and providing a verbal presentation at such local research forum as the Cancer Council WA Research Day, or Science on the Swan.
- f) Cancer Council WA will invite successful applicants to attend our annual Research Awards Lunch where they will be awarded a Certificate of Achievement recognising their success in this research grant round. This event will provide an opportunity to showcase leading researchers and to create a forum where researchers and potential donors can meet. We ask that the CIA or a senior member of the research team is available for this event.
- g) Cancer Council WA will publish plain language summary information provided by the successful applicant in section C of their application at the lunch and on the Cancer Council WA website. Please note that information may be shared on social media platforms.
- h) Cancer Council WA may, at its own initiative, ask investigators to participate in release of details of their research to the media. Sensitivities relating to pre-publication release will be respected in such circumstances.

Publications arising from grants

- i) Cancer Council WA encourages the publication of results and the dissemination of other information from the research we fund. Such publications would occur through the normal acceptable scientific channels and there should always be an acknowledgment that Cancer Council WA funding has been provided (with the following footnote included: 'This work was carried out during the tenure of a grant from

Cancer Council Western Australia'). A copy of the published paper should also be forwarded to us.

Reporting Obligations

- j) In fulfilment of the conditions of an award, an end-of-project-report of the project shall be submitted within three months of the conclusion of the project. Failure to submit a grant report at this time will render all investigators on the grant application ineligible for further funding from Cancer Council WA until the grant report is received. Additional brief supplementary reports will be required 12 months and 5 years after submission of the end of project report. The reports shall be prepared by the recipient and will be used to monitor progress and for reporting the results of our research funding. All reporting templates, including the progress-extensions request template, will be made available on our online portal.

Intellectual Property Policy

- k) In the event of any discovery with a potential for commercial exploitation that arises as a result of research supported by Cancer Council WA grants, the Applicant is bound by the conditions of the award to notify the Cancer Council WA accordingly. Award Intellectual Property will be owned by and immediately vest upon the administering institution, or with whoever they assign it to. The Applicant agrees to disclose in confidence to the Cancer Council WA, any inventions or discoveries that arise in the course of the research.

Chief investigator resignation

- l) Resignation of a CI (including change of institution or relocation to another state) during the tenure of a grant may result in termination of a project before expiration of the approved term of support. Because of the importance of the CI in the initial grant review, it is essential that the commencement or continuation of the grant is assessed by the Postdoctoral Research Grants Advisory Subcommittee.
- m) Cancer Council WA must be advised in writing regarding what, if any, arrangements will be made to complete the research for which the grant was offered and give a written report of progress to that date. Cancer Council WA's Postdoctoral Research Grants Advisory Subcommittee will decide on the basis of the information supplied and following what other investigations it deems necessary, whether the grant should be continued in full, at a reduced level, or not at all.

Ethics approval

- n) The first payment of a new grant will not be made until confirmation has been received from the administering institution's research office that all necessary approvals have been obtained (i.e., human ethics, animal ethics and biosafety).

Process of Claiming Funds

- o) Payments in respect of any grant shall be within the terms and conditions specified in the grant offer.
- p) The successful research project must commence within a 6 month period from the date of fund availability.
- q) Projects with commencement delays of more than 6 months and less than 18 months from the date of fund availability will require reassessment and approval to proceed.
- r) Research not commenced after 18 months of the date of fund availability, will forfeit the grant.
- s) Once the project has commenced, all research must be completed within an 18 month period and claims outside that period will need to be approved by Cancer Council WA's

Postdoctoral Research Grants Advisory Subcommittee. The grant report is required within three months of the time of completion.

- t) Amounts granted are exclusive of GST. All claims are to be made via a tax invoice from the Researcher's GST registered Administering Institution. Invoices must include the institution's ABN and GST on top of the total grant amount (i.e., your invoice must include 10% extra for the GST).
- u) Grants are paid in quarterly instalments on receipt of a tax invoice from the Administering Institution. The initial invoice must be generated at the commencement of the research project.
- v) In exceptional/extenuating circumstances, and upon formal application, a variation to the payment method outlined above may be approved.
- w) A financial acquittal report is to be provided with the final report or at any other time reasonably requested by Cancer Council WA.
- x) At the submission of the final report any funds that are uncommitted must be repaid unless permission is sought and obtained in writing to use any residual funds to complete work specified in the original application.
- y) The grant must be spent wholly for the purposes for which it was requested and so certified by the investigators and the Administering Institution.
- z) In the event where a need arises for the administration of a grant to be transferred from one institution to another, a written request for this transfer must be made giving reasons for the transfer. The transfer must not be made without formal approval.

8. Matters not otherwise addressed

For matters relating to process and policy not covered in detail in this guide to applicants, the Cancer Council WA Research Grants Advisory Committee will use the policies and processes applied by the National Health and Medical Research Council as a reference point. The prime objective remains to operate a fair, open process which seeks to allocate the funds in a way that is consistent with the values of Cancer Council WA so as to allocate donors' funds in the most effective manner in pursuing the mission, goals and strategies of Cancer Council WA.

9. Further information

Queries about the completion of the Postdoctoral Fellowship process should be addressed to:

Research Development Officer
Cancer Prevention and Research
Cancer Council Western Australia
Level 1, 420 Bagot Road, SUBIACO WA 6008
Phone: (08) 9338 4328
Email: CancerCouncilWA.research@cancerwa.asn.au
www.cancerwa.asn.au