2020 Research Grants Application Guide

Key dates for 2020 Grant Round

Applications open: Monday 1 July 2019

Applications close: 5pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019

Grants awarded: mid-December 2019

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1. Introduction

This Research Grant Application Guide serves to outline the overarching funding rules of all Stroke Foundation Research Grants. This document should be read before completing an application form.

The Stroke Foundation's Research Program funds annual research grants to promote stroke research capacity and generate new stroke knowledge. Since 2008, the Stroke Foundation has awarded almost $4.7 million in research grants to more than 200 researchers.

2. Purpose

Stroke research is a core part of our mission to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery. By supporting research, we are fostering the current and next generation of leaders who will pave the way forward to the next innovation in stroke prevention, treatment and care.

For the 2020 Grant Round, Stroke Foundation's Research Grants program aims to further build capacity in the research community by offering **Early Career Researcher Seed Grants.**

The 2020 Grant Round also aims to address a research gap in **carer support by allocating one of the four Seed grants available to this priority area.**

3. 2020 Early Career Researcher Seed Grants and Research Priority Areas

› **Four (4)** Seed Grants in total of up to $50,000 per grant available to early career researchers, addressing (at least) one of the following Stroke Foundation 2020 Research Priority Areas.

› **One (1)** of the four Seed Grants is allocated to a Support for Carers project in the 2020 Round.

› These grants are to conduct pilot or feasibility studies that will be used to inform a larger nationally competitive grant submission (eg. NHMRC project grants).

3.1. 2020 Research Priority Areas

To improve access to and delivery of:

i. long term community support (e.g. continuity of care, health services, and rehabilitation) with outcome measures beyond 6 months;

ii. interventions for long term psychosocial recovery (i.e. recovery of cognition, communication, and emotional and social wellbeing) with outcome measures beyond 6 months;

iii. health services and pathways of stroke management, including proposals addressing implementation and change in practice (i.e. translation into practice for acute stroke care studies);

iv. support for the diverse needs of Carers.

One Seed grant is allocated to a carer support project, subject to the external independent review panel's assessment of proposal quality for funding eligibility.

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1. Who may apply for Early Career Researcher Seed Grants?

› These grants are available to **Principal Investigators who are Early Career Researchers** (and supported by a more experienced research team).

Early Career definition	No more than five years full-time equivalent (FTE) post doctorate (from the date of having a PhD awarded), **and** no more than 10 years FTE since medical graduation, as at the grant application close date.

› Applicants who have experienced **career disruptions will be considered**. Please provide appropriate information in the application form.

› Lead applicants who have previously received a Seed Grant from the Stroke Foundation are **not eligible**.

› One submission per Applicant will be accepted.

4.2. **Proposal eligibility – what may be funded**

› Applications must address one (or more) of the 2020 Priority Areas (see 3.1).

› The research must be carried out in Australia.

› Applicants are required to justify their proposal's inclusion and exclusion criteria. Proposals that provide considered inclusion methods, including for people with communication impairments and from marginalised and disadvantaged populations relevant to the study, will be highly regarded. See Section 5.

› Preference will be given to those applications including some, or all, of the following criteria:

   a. Innovative projects.

   b. Pilot studies to enable a research project to be developed such that it could be supported by a recognised grant-giving agency in subsequent years.

   c. Applications that follow the CONSORT[1] criteria; TIDieR guidelines[2]; and observational studies that follow STROBE[3] criteria.

› Each grant is to be used for equipment, support personnel such as research assistants or casual help, or other assistance necessary for a specific project.

4.3. **Proposal ineligibility - what is not funded?**

› The Stroke Foundation does not cover institutional fees/infrastructure costs/overheads.

› The Stroke Foundation research program has a clinical focus with its research priorities, therefore does not fund laboratory based research.

› Applications that do not address the research priority area(s) directly.

Please also refer to Appendix 1: FAQ's.

5.   **Inclusive Research**

Stroke Foundation supports inclusive research that does not unnecessarily exclude disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

5.1.   In justifying inclusion criteria, applicants should ensure they provide brief details on their proposed methods for facilitating inclusion of people from different populations.

5.2.   In relation to people with communication impairments:

Communication disorders post-stroke are common and include people with aphasia, apraxia of speech, dysarthria and cognitive-communication disorders. This population is often excluded from stroke research due to difficulties in recruitment or perceptions that people with communication impairments cannot provide consent or information for research.[4]

› Inclusive methods could include: modified information and consent forms/procedures, inclusion of communication supports in interviews or treatment sessions, modified outcome measures where possible, access to expertise in communicative inclusion.

For example: "People with aphasia of any severity will be included in this research through the use of modified consent forms and outcome measures [see detail in plan]. Only those individuals without capacity to consent will be excluded in this study."

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[1]http://www.consort-statement.org/

[2] Better Reporting of Interventions: Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR) Checklist and Guide Hoffman et al. BMJ 2014

[3]The Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) Statement: Guidelines for Reporting Observational Studies von Elm et al. PLoS Med 2007

[4] Brady MC, Fredrick A, Williams B. People with aphasia: capacity to consent, research participation and intervention inequalities. Int J Stroke 2013; 8: 193–196.

> ❭ Note: Specific studies targeting people with communication impairments may also be relevant and inclusive procedures should also be applied to those research protocols.

> ❭ Resources to help stroke researchers enable people with aphasia to participate in research are available from National Institute for Health Research.

5.3.   In justifying exclusion criteria, applicants should demonstrate how inclusion would be inappropriate for the study.

6.   Application procedure

6.1.   This Research Grant Application Guide should be read before completing an application form.

6.2.   **Application forms** are available on the Stroke Foundation website from the opening of the Round: https://strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Research/Research-grants

6.3.   The application form should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of application.

6.4.   All applicants are required to use the application template and adhere to length and formatting requirements as stated in the application form and outlined below. Any applications not using the template will be deemed **ineligible**.

Formatting Component	Requirement
File format	Word or PDF are acceptable
Page size	A4
Page margin	1.7cm left and right margin, 2.5cm top and bottom margin
Page limits	As stated within the application form.
Font	Arial Size 11
Line spacing	Single

7.   Submission deadline

❭ All applications must be fully signed and submitted via email to research@strokefoundation.org.au by the closing date and time (5pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019). **Late submissions will not be considered.**

❭ Submitted applications will receive a return email acknowledgement from the Stroke Foundation. **Please ensure you have received this acknowledgement prior to the deadline.**

❭ For queries or to confirm receipt contact research@strokefoundation.org.au or phone Michelle Adamson on (03) 9918 7215.

We understand that situations arise at the last minute that can delay applications. For this reason, we encourage applicants to submit your application at least a day ahead of the deadline. Please be aware that the Stroke Foundation will **not** allow extensions and will **not** allow any applications after the deadline. This includes any IT issues that arise during the submission process. We recommend that you confirm with your research office the timing required for certification and the procedure for submission. Any applications received after the deadline will be deemed **ineligible**. This ensures an equitable process for all applicants.

8.   Review process

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) oversees the Stroke Foundation Research Program. All applications will be reviewed and scored by independent and external reviewers. Funding will be awarded to the highest ranking applications. Each funding scheme will be reviewed independently by reviewers allocated to the one scheme.

When reviewing the applications, reviewers are asked to score against each of the criteria outlined in the Descriptors (Descriptors available on the Stroke Foundation website: https://strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Research/Research-grants). Each application is scored with a weighting of 50% for "Research Program" (scientific quality), and 25% for each of "Relevance" to the scheme and "Team Track Record", by five independent reviewers. The reviewers each receive the same number of applications and, after scoring them, are asked to rank each application. Within each scheme, all of the ranks from all of the reviewers are then combined into one overall ranked list. The RAC is provided with a de-identified copy of each ranked list. These lists provide a basis for funding recommendations.

9. Outcome of application

9.1. Stroke Foundation aims to advise applicants and their institutional contact via email of the outcome of their Research Grant submission by mid-late December 2019.

9.2. Stroke Foundation research grant review process is robust and independent and focuses on impact and evidence. It also adheres to a strict conflicts of interest policy. The decision making process is final and there is no appeal process.

9.3. Grants offered within this Round represent the full allocation of Stroke Foundation's research grant funding pool as determined by the Stroke Foundation Board. Resubmissions, either in part or in full, are not considered outside of a grant round. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to reapply in the next grant round.

9.4. Feedback from the independent peer review is available upon request.

10. 2020 Grant Round Timeline of Peer Review Process

› Applications received (5pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019)

› Applications assigned to external reviewers (10 September 2019)

› Grant Review Panel assess and rank applications (October 2019)

› Funding recommendations prepared (early November 2019)

› RAC meet (mid-November 2019)

› Approval by Stroke Foundation Board of Directors (early December 2019)

› Advice to applicants (mid-December 2019)

11. Approvals to be obtained prior to funding commencing

11.1. The research undertaken must conform to the principles set out by the NHMRC's Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and any other conditions required by Human Research Ethics Committees.

11.2. Funding for Research Grants will not be released to the nominated institution until all relevant approvals, particularly in relation to ethics and governance, have been received and lodged with the Stroke Foundation prior to the commencement of the research.

12. Consumer and community participation

12.1. There is an increasing emphasis on the inclusion and consultation of consumers in research.

12.2. In considering the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research, applicants should refer to The Consumer Health Forum of Australia Inc. and NHMRC Statement available at: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research

12.3. Research studies can be listed on the Stroke Foundation website to recruit consumers from our community. Please see: https://strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Research/Request-for-research-participant-policy

13. Acceptance of Conditions of Research Grant Award

13.1. All Research Grants are offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the 'Stroke Foundation Conditions of Research Grant Award' available on the Stroke Foundation website: https://strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Research/Research-grants.

13.2. Successful applicants and their institutional contact will receive a Letter of Award and a copy of the Conditions of Research Grant Award by email to advise the offer of award.

13.3. The Head of Department must sign acceptance of the Conditions of Research Grant Award for, and on behalf of, the administering institution.

13.4. In signing an acceptance of the Conditions of Research Grant Award, the Recipient and the administering institution are agreeing to abide by all the conditions, which includes but is not limited to;

› the research must be undertaken at the nominated institution;

› acknowledgement of the Stroke Foundation in agreed format in any presentation or publication of the work;

› a final report and financial acquittal provided at the end of the grant period;

› agreement that the grant Recipient may be contacted to represent the Stroke Foundation.

13.5. The documentation specified within the Letter of Award must be returned to the Stroke Foundation by the institutional contact or successful applicant by the date nominated.

14. Varying a grant

14.1. Grant Recipients agree to perform the activities specified in the original application. If the Recipient is unable to perform, or to continue to perform, activities in relation to the award, the Stroke Foundation must be notified in writing as soon as practicable.

14.2. Variations occur when there is a requirement to modify a grant from the original proposal submitted. This may include changes in budget or personnel or an amendment to the budget. Extensions to a research project end date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, with a maximum extension of 6 months.

14.3. Requests to amend a grant or the terms and conditions should be made to research@strokefoundation.org.au and a Research Grant Variation Form will be provided.

15. Duration of grant and expenditure of funds

15.1. **Seed Grants are 18 month awards** which take effect from the start of the award year (i.e. 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021).

15.2. Expenditure of funds must be within the grant period and in accordance with the budget submitted, unless a variation has been approved by the Stroke Foundation.

15.3. Funds that have not been spent at the conclusion of the award must be returned to the Stroke Foundation within 30 days of the invoice issued to the nominated institution.

16. Reporting

16.1. A Stroke Foundation Seed Grant final report template will be provided to Recipients, which is due at the end of the 18 month grant period (ie. 30 June 2021). This submission is to be accompanied by a financial acquittal prepared by the administering institution.

16.2.	Where a grant Recipient fails to submit satisfactory reports when required, the Stroke Foundation may determine that all or part of the funding must be repaid. In addition, a grant Recipient who fails to submit satisfactory reports may not be eligible to apply for future funding rounds of the Stroke Foundation Research Program.

16.3.	All information provided to the Stroke Foundation in progress and final reports may be used for internal reporting, media releases and in any Stroke Foundation publications.

## 17.	Enquiries

Any enquiries regarding the administration of grants should be addressed to:
Stroke Foundation: Research Administration & Compliance Officer, Michelle Adamson
Email:	research@strokefoundation.org.au
Telephone: 03 9918 7215

## 18.	Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge Royal Melbourne Hospital Research Directorate for their assistance in providing materials and advice on these documents.

Appendix 1: FAQ's

Grant Types

1. **Why is the Stroke Foundation only offering Seed Grants again in 2020?**

   As a national charity, the Stroke Foundation relies on the support of the Australian Community to continue its work. A downturn in some key fundraising areas has meant that the funding available to support research grants in recent rounds has been reduced.

   Given the funding pool available as determined by the Stroke Foundation Board, the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) has agreed to allocate the funding as four (4) Seed Grants in 2020.

2. **Will Small Project Grants and Future Leader Grants be available in future grant rounds?**

   The Research Grant funding pool is reviewed and agreed annually by the Stroke Foundation Board based on the organisation's financial performance.

   Once the 2021 funding pool is approved by the Board, then the RAC will determine the type, priority areas and number of grants in the funding round.

Eligibility

3. **Does the research career stage eligibility criteria only apply to the Principal Investigator?**

   Yes.

4. **Is either a PhD or a medical degree a pre-requisite to apply?**
   No.

5. **Are PhD students eligible to apply?**
   Yes.

6. **In calculating research years for career stage, how is career disruption and 'relative to opportunity' defined?**
   Stroke Foundation uses similar criteria to NHMRC for these definitions. The time spent doing research is counted towards the career stage. If the applicant can demonstrate that they have not worked in research for a period of time, then this time can be deducted from the time post PhD. Make sure to include all of these details in the career disruption section.

7. **Are clinical duties considered a career disruption from research?**
   Yes. Applicants should specify the percentages of time for clinical duties and for research.

8. **What is the preferred length in answering the career stage question?**
   A sentence or two outlining the career stage. This is to enable reviewers to grade the application relative to opportunity, and to determine the career stage of the applicant.

9. **Am I eligible if stroke has not been my main area of research?**

   Yes, this is based on your proposal meeting the eligibility criteria. However, one component of the scoring is track record. It is advisable to include team members with experience in stroke research.

10. **Can a researcher be named on multiple applications?**
    A researcher can be named as the Principal Investigator in one application for the 2020 grant round, and in multiple applications as a Chief Investigator.

Applying

11. **I'm having trouble choosing the priority area that best fits my project?**

    Unfortunately, it is not for us to decide which category of priority that it best falls into. Many research projects do not fit fully into one priority and may span across a few different ones. You are welcome to choose more than one priority.

12. **What format should applications be submitted in?**

   Word doc is the preferred format for all research grant applications. PDF format is also acceptable.

13. **Who should submit the application i.e. Principal Investigator, or internal research grants office?**

   Either is acceptable. It is important that you confirm this arrangement ahead of submission, as well as gain the emailed acknowledgement of receipt following submission. You may wish to cc all in the submission as well.

Documentation

14. **Do I need to include my PhD certificate to prove my eligibility?**

   No, simply state when you received your PhD in the appropriate section of the application form.

15. **What evidence is needed to show experience in stroke research?**

   Provide this in the track record statement on the application form. Any stroke related publications can be listed in the table for the 5 most relevant publications produced by the investigators.

16. **Is it 5 publications only or 5 publications per investigator that can be listed for Publication Track Record?**

   A total of five publications only from any of the investigators that are most relevant to the application can be listed in this section. Contributions by the lead applicant to publications will be well regarded.

17. **Are copies of CVs and ethics required?**

   No. The information in the application template will be sufficient and should not require any further attachments. If you are successful, ethics approval will be required then.

18. **Are references required in the Project Summary (Section 1) of the application form?**

   Responses are acceptable without references in Section 1 of the application form. However, anything based on prior work should be cited and then listed in the reference table (Section 5).

Research Team

19. **Is there any limit to the number of Chief Investigators included in the application?**

   This is flexible. You can add the extra lines into the application template for them.

20. **Can senior researchers or senior advisers of the stroke research be added as Chief Investigators?**

   Yes and particularly for the 2020 Grant Round, it is recommended that the early career Principal Investigator is supported by a more experienced research team.

21. **What if a Principal Investigator is transitioning from a different field of research to stroke (clinical) research?**

   This is fine as long as the research meets the criteria. Details of the transition can be included in the track record statement referring to "relative to opportunity".

Grant funds

22. **Are grants subject to the GST of the Stroke Foundation?**

   Yes.

23. **Does the Stroke Foundation cover institutional fees/infrastructure costs/overheads?**

   No, the Stroke Foundation does not cover any of the above costs.

24. **Can grant funding be used for equipment, research assistant salaries, consumables and travel?**

   The funding can be for anything that contributes to the study objectives, but the costs must be justified.

25. **Can on-costs be included as part of salary cost in the budget?**

    Yes. On-costs are an unavoidable part of the salary cost and can be included in the project budget.

26. **Can severance pay be included in grant acquittals?**

    No. We only include costs that support the actual cost of the project, and so severance pay would not be included.

International

27. **Does the Stroke Foundation award grants internationally?**

    No, the Stroke Foundation does not award grants to applicants outside of Australia.

28. **Is a project eligible if it is led by Australian researchers but collected data internationally?**

    The project could be considered if it also collected data for Australia or would benefit Australian patients.

29. **Can a researcher from another country be the Principal Investigator for the grant, but the research be completed at an Australian University?**

    People from overseas can be a Principal Investigator, but the research must be done in Australia and administered by an Australian institution. You should highlight your contribution and explain the practicalities of conducting the study.