A Short Guide about

NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships
The NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships scheme (NHMRC PGS) funds successful applicants to attain a research based postgraduate degree, (i.e. a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or a Masters Degree).

It supports outstanding health and medical graduates early in their career so they can develop their capacity to conduct original independent research within Australia that is internationally competitive.

This brief overview document looks at the categories of award, eligibility requirements and assessment criteria and scoring for the various PGS scholarships.
Categories of Award

**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Research Postgraduate Scholarships** - support for research training (graduates) in areas of health with particular relevance to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Medical / Dental Postgraduate Scholarships** - support for combined MBBS/PhD students, and medical or dental graduates in all relevant health-related disciplines including the social and behavioural sciences.

**Dora Lush Biomedical Research Postgraduate Scholarships** - support for graduates whose pathway to PhD or Masters studies has been subject to significant interruption or delay and provide an opportunity for those individuals to obtain formal training in biomedical research.

**Public Health and Health Services Research Postgraduate Scholarships** - support to graduates to obtain formal training in public health and/or health services research.

Other scholarships or awards

**Co-funded Postgraduate Scholarships** - offered through co-funding partnerships between NHMRC and partner organisation(s). They offer additional opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the concerns and research interests of partner organisation(s). Evaluation and ranking of an application by NHMRC is entirely independent of any assessment made by co-funding partners. These are not alternative awards but provide additional financial value.

**Gustav Nossal Postgraduate Scholarship** – each year the highest ranked Medical/Dental applicant will receive this award. This award carries no additional funding.
Eligibility Criteria

General eligibility criteria:

- Citizenship/residency: At the time of acceptance and for the duration of an award, the Scholarship holder must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia, or a New Zealand citizen with Special Category Visa status.
- Australia based: The Scholarship holder must also be based in Australia for at least 80 percent of the funding period.

Additional eligibility criteria:

1. Applicants may only submit one NHMRC Postgraduate scholarship (PGS) application per application round.
2. Ensure they submit a complete application (including supervisor report).
3. Applicants must not have previously been funded for a NHMRC PGS.
4. Applicants must propose a project that is based in Australia. Elements of the project can be undertaken outside of Australia (e.g. data gathering) but the scholar, supervisor and project must be all Australian based and located at an eligible Australian Institution.

Specific Award Eligibility Requirements

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Health Research Postgraduate Scholarship and Public Health and Health Services Postgraduate Scholarship applicants: must hold a health related degree or a degree in an area applicable to public health research; or be a medical or dental graduate currently registered to practice in Australia.

Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarship applicants: must be students currently enrolled in a combined MBBS/PhD program; or be medical or dental graduates currently registered to practice in Australia; or be medical graduates during their intern year; or be dental graduates prior to graduation with evidence of high quality work.
Dora Lush Biomedical Research Postgraduate Scholarships are open to: people with undergraduate qualifications whose career has been interrupted due to:

• career disruption (parental or carer’s responsibilities or illness/misadventure);
• community work; or
• lack of financial capacity and need to earn a living

or where the applicant:
• has pursued other interests and now wishes to develop a health or medical research career;
• holds qualifications in a non-health or medical discipline but now wishes to develop a health or medical research career; and
• has built a significant body of experience through laboratory work.

In addition, all Dora Lush applicants must satisfy the following criteria:
• The date on which the most recent academic qualification was conferred must be at least five years prior to 1 January of the year in which the award is to commence; and
• The proposed PhD or Research Masters program must be in a biomedical field.

Ineligible Situations

Applicants will be ineligible if at the time of application:

1. The applicant is a current holder of an Australian Government Scholarship such as an Australian Postgraduate Award;
2. The applicant is in their final year of an honours degree;
3. The degree proposed is not a PhD or a Research Masters degree;
4. The proposed degree is not a research degree;
5. The applicant has completed more than 24 months of their PhD candidature as at 1 January in the first year of funding (or 12 months of their Masters candidature if applying for a Masters Postgraduate Scholarship from 1 January in the first year of funding.)
Assessment Criteria

Applications are assessed and ranked against the assessment criteria listed below:

1. Academic Record and Research Achievement – relative to opportunity 60%
2. Research Environment and Supervisor 20%
3. Research Project 20%

All applications that directly relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health also address the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria, namely community engagement, benefit, sustainability and transferability, and building capacity.

Relative to Opportunity

Note that applications submitted to NHMRC are assessed “relative to opportunity” reflecting NHMRC’s policy that assessment processes accurately consider an applicant’s track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including consideration as to whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant.

Circumstances considered under relative to opportunity include:

- amount of time spent as an active researcher;
- career disruption*
- 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 his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact upon research productivity;
- research outputs and productivity commensurate with time spent employed in other sectors and restrictions on publication associated with time spent working in other sectors (e.g. industry, policy and government);
Funding Details

Grant Duration

1-3 years

Funding Details (2016 rates)

• Standard Stipend - $26,289 pa
• Priority Stipend (biomedical and health stipend for holders of allied health professional qualifications who are registered with their relevant association) - $33,884 pa
• Medical/Dental Stipend - $39,142 pa
• Consumables/travel to relevant conferences allowance - $2,250 pa
• Thesis allowance - $500 (one-off)
• Relocation allowance, if applicable - $1,385 (one off)

Recent Success Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Application</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Funded</th>
<th>Funded rate</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
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<td>29.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*: ‘Career disruption’ is a sub-category of relative to opportunity and involves a prolonged absence from work interruption (28 calendar days or more) to an applicant’s capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness or carer’ responsibilities.
General Application Tips

Start preparing your application early so you have adequate information required to support your application (e.g. academic transcripts, time to obtain all registration evidence).

Obtain feedback from your supervisors/peers on your draft application.

Let Research Development and Support (RDS) know if you intend to submit an application, to ensure you are advised of any new developments.

Carefully read the Funding Rules, and Advice and Instructions for the scheme. Detailed instructions as to how to complete the application in Research Grants Management System (RGMS), NHMRC’s online grant application system, are in the Advice and Instructions, so read those in full. If you are uncertain about your eligibility or any of the rules, contact the RSO.

Comply with deadlines. NHMRC have strict submission deadlines for the submission of the application and referee reports. Your application will be ineligible without the supervisor report, so advise your supervisor well in advance of the report requirements and deadline. In addition, RDS has an internal deadline for compliance review of applications. This is usually 3 weeks prior to the NHMRC deadline, so submit to RDS by the internal deadline to obtain the benefit of a full compliance review.

In respect of the application itself:
• Avoid acronyms where possible.

• Ensure any tables/graphs/images are clear and compliant with the formatting rules.

• Comply with the content and formatting rules. NHMRC have a policy of strict conformance with page limits and formatting requirements.

• Is your Grant Proposal easy to read? Make sure there is enough white space and use consistent formatting throughout so it is easy for the Peer Review Panel (PRP) members to read your proposal.

• As Academic Record and Research Achievement is an important component of the assessment criteria (worth 60), spend time on the academic record section and review and update your RGMS CV to include all information that will enhance your application. Also make sure your academic transcript is properly ordered and includes an explanation of scores.

• If you have any relative to opportunity matters you wish the PRP to consider, include these in your application.

• Allow yourself time/space to incorporate feedback and review/polish your application. Let it sit for a few days before the final proof read.

Remember to complete a Flinders University certification form. This is an internal Flinders University requirement for all external research grant applications.

Resources
The scheme information in this guide is sourced from the NHMRC website/rules and is based on the 2016 round rules (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants-funding/apply-funding/postgraduate-scholarships).

Students considering applying to a scheme are advised to read the rules for the round in which they intend to apply, as the rules often change for new rounds.
Contacts and Further Information

All NHMRC queries should be directed to nhmrc@flinders.edu.au

Further information can be obtained on the RDS Funding and Contracts website - http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/grants-contracts/search/nhmrc-schemes/