

# Metro South Health Research Support Scheme

## 2027 Funding Guidelines

Novice Researcher Grants – up to \$30,000

Early Career Researcher Grants – up to \$100,000

Research Fellowship – up to \$200,000

Future Research Leader Fellowship - up to \$300,000

Project Grants – up to \$125,000

Program Grants – up to \$350,000

Co-funded Collaboration Grants - \$50,000

**Funding Guidelines and Application information available at:**

<http://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/rss>

**Enquiries to:**

Senior Research Grants Officer, Metro South Research

Email: [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au)

Phone: 07 3443 8057

Metro South Health  
Study, Education and Research Trust Account



*We care about you*



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## 1. CONTEXT

Established in 2012, the purpose of the Metro South Health Research Support Scheme (MSH RSS) is to facilitate high quality health and medical research that benefits our community through an annual research funding program. Originally known as the PA Research Support Scheme, the scheme has broadened to include all Metro South Health facilities and services, and partner institutions. The Scheme is administered by the Metro South Health Research Office and funded by the Metro South Health Study, Education and Research Trust Account (SERTA), the PA Research Foundation, and our university partners.

The following documents describe the principles that guide service delivery and research in Queensland's public health system, and should be used to inform your MSH RSS application:

- [MSH Research and Innovation Strategy 2025-2030](#)
- [Department of Health Strategic Plan 2025-2029](#)
- [Metro South Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#)
- [Metro South Health Service Plan 2024-2028](#)
- [Brisbane South Joint Regional Needs Assessment 2025-2027](#)

## 2. FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Metro South Health (MSH) is committed to the following principles for the MSH RSS:

- Achievement of a reasonable balance in the distribution of grants across all MSH facilities and services,
- Achievement of gender equity in the grants program,
- Development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research that aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,
- Support of high-quality research that meets the needs of our community,
- Maintenance of the highest levels of probity throughout the Scheme.

### 2.1 TARGET GROUPS/RESEARCH AREAS

MSH may identify target groups and research areas that enable special consideration for applicants and research that would support achievement of these funding principles.

For the 2027 RSS, MSH encourages applications in any grant category from the following:

- Applicants employed within, and for research primarily conducted at:
  - Community & Oral Health Services
  - Logan and Beaudesert Health Service
  - QEII Hospital
  - Bayside Health Service
  - Southern Queensland Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, Inala
- Female and non-binary applicants (principal investigators)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants
- Applicants with research that is focused on improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Applicants with research that addresses the high and medium priority needs of the Metro South community, as described in the Brisbane South Joint Regional Needs Assessment 2025 – 2027.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

The MSH RSS aims to facilitate high-quality research that translates research evidence into advancements in health and medical outcomes. The Scheme's objectives are:

#### 3.1 DELIVER RESEARCH TRANSLATION

The RSS contributes to the translation of research evidence into positive impacts for the Hospital and Health Service and our patients, recognising the importance of health equity for priority population groups represented in our diverse community.

The RSS aims to balance generating new knowledge and the uptake of research-based evidence, by encouraging applications in clinical and health services research, implementation science, and basic science.

#### 3.2 PROMOTE PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

The RSS contributes to a strong research culture by supporting the equitable participation, progression, and retention of MSH researchers.

The RSS facilitates a pathway for novice and early-career researchers to develop research skills and a track record, in addition to Project and Program funding for established researchers to develop research teams and programs.

The RSS aims to prepare MSH researchers for success in external grant schemes.

#### 3.3 STIMULATE RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The RSS encourages collaborations within departments, across disciplines, sites and institutions, and consultation with consumers to enhance research practice and foster collaborative approaches to delivering health care solutions.

The RSS aims to build and develop partnerships with other Hospital and Health Services, research institutes, universities, and industry to leverage funding and strengthen research capacity.

### 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE MSH RESEARCH SUPPORT SCHEME

The MSH RSS is administered by the Metro South Health Research Office, in accordance with Metro South Health Research Management policy and procedures, which may be accessed at:

<https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/research/about-us/policies-and-procedures>

### 5. FUNDING BODIES

The MSH RSS is supported by the following funding bodies:

- **Metro South Health Study, Education, and Research Trust Account (SERTA)**
- **PA Research Foundation**
- **Griffith University Health Group (Griffith Health)**
- **Queensland University of Technology (QUT)**
- **The University of Queensland (UQ)**

The award of research funds is governed by the regulations associated with each funding body that decide the type and number of grants they support and the level of funding to be provided.

## 6. OVERVIEW OF 2027 MSH RSS GRANT CATEGORIES

### 6.1 METRO SOUTH SERTA FUNDED GRANTS

#### 6.1.1 Novice Researcher Grants

*Purpose:* To encourage participation in research and the development of a research track record, under the guidance of a research supervisor. The supervisor must be an experienced researcher and be willing and have the capacity to provide expert guidance for the duration of the project. The supervisor may be a MSH employee or external to MSH if that facilitates access to the most appropriate expertise.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees new to research. The applicant will have no previous experience as a principal investigator on a research project/grant.

*Amount:* up to \$30,000.00

*Time:* up to two years from 1 January 2027

#### 6.1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Novice Researcher Grant

*Purpose:* To encourage participation in research and the development of a research track record, under the guidance of a research supervisor. The supervisor must be an experienced researcher and be willing and have the capacity to provide expert guidance for the duration of the project. The supervisor may be a MSH employee or external to MSH if that facilitates access to the most appropriate expertise.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and are new to research. The applicant will have no previous experience as a principal investigator on a research project/grant.

*Amount:* up to \$30,000.00

*Time:* up to three years from 1 January 2027

#### 6.1.3 Early Career Researcher Grants

*Purpose:* To encourage applications from employees with an emerging track record of conducting and publishing research. The applicant must nominate a mentor who is an experienced researcher and be willing and have the capacity to provide expert guidance for the duration of the project. The mentor may be a MSH employee or external to MSH if that facilitates access to the most appropriate expertise.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees. Applicants with a higher degree by research (HDR) will be within four (4) years of the award at the time of submitting an application. Applicants without a HDR are eligible to apply. However, where an applicant without a HDR is determined by the assessment panel to have a research track record equivalent to a HDR plus four years, they will not be considered eligible as an early career researcher.

*Amount:* up to \$100,000

*Time:* up to two years from 1 January 2027

#### 6.1.4 Research Fellowship

*Purpose:* To build the capacity of MSH researchers to drive research that delivers impact for our community. The Fellowship will fund protected research time for the applicant to lead research aligned with MSH strategic objectives and community needs and is intended to enhance the recipient's research track record of delivering original contributions in their field. The applicant will be required to commit a minimum 0.1 FTE to Fellowship activities.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees. Employees previously or currently appointed to a Research Fellow position are not eligible to apply. Employees who have previously held an

externally funded Research Fellowship or will hold an externally funded Research Fellowship during the funding period, (for example a QH Clinical Research or Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowship) are ineligible to apply. The applicant is ineligible if they have already been named CIA on a MRFF, NHMRC or ARC grant, or subsequently accepts an offer from the MRFF, NHMRC or ARC in relation to a grant application submitted in 2026.

*Amount:* up to \$200,000

*Time:* a minimum of two and up to three years from 1 January 2027

#### 6.1.5 **MSH Future Research Leader Fellowship**

*Purpose:* The MSH RSS is committed to the development of a culture of excellence in research and fostering and retaining the next generation of research leaders within MSH. The Fellowship aims to support the development of the applicant in leading translational research aligned with MSH strategic objectives and community needs. The Fellowship will facilitate protected research time to accelerate knowledge translation within their field and add weight to their track record. The applicant will be required to commit a minimum 0.2 FTE to Fellowship activities, while maintaining a clinical role with MSH. The applicant will have demonstrated a positive trajectory of research skills development, and attributes that enable their recognition as an emerging exemplary researcher. It is highly desirable that the applicant has demonstrated leadership qualities and a commitment to the organisation through their service.

The application must include a signed statement of support that:

- endorses the applicant as a suitable candidate in respect to the Fellowship criteria and
- acknowledges the requirement for maintaining a related clinical role and minimum 0.2 FTE protected research time for the duration of the Fellowship and confirm the arrangement for implementing same,
- must be on department letterhead and signed by the Head of Department or an authorised delegate. If the Head of Department or authorised delegate has a COI the signature should be escalated to their Line Manager.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees. The applicant must have been employed by MSH for the last 12 months and have an ongoing appointment for the proposed term of the Fellowship. The applicant is ineligible if they have already been named CIA on a MRFF, NHMRC or ARC grant, or subsequently accepts an offer from the MRFF, NHMRC or ARC in relation to a grant application submitted in 2026.

*Amount:* up to \$300,000

*Time:* a minimum of two and up to three years from 1 January 2027

#### 6.1.6 **Project Grants**

*Purpose:* To support a research project aligned with MSH strategic objectives and community needs. Research proposals demonstrating collaborations across departments, disciplines, sites, and with our university partners and consumers will be highly regarded. Within this category an additional targeted opportunity encourages applications for:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Grant** – The MSH RSS supports the [MSH First Nations Health Equity Strategy 2025-2028](#) aimed at improving health service delivery and health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. One Project Grant will be available for a research project that focusses on improving the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The [NHMRC Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) and [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander](#)

[Research](#) provides guidance for designing a proposal partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is highly desirable that, and special consideration will be given to applications that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, involvement and capacity development through the research, including, but not limited to:

- The project addresses key health and wellbeing priorities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement in development of the research,
- Leadership and/or inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher/s and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumer/s on the research team, and
- Has a Letter of Support from the MSH First Nations Community Jury for Health Research ([MSHFirstNationsCommunityJury@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSHFirstNationsCommunityJury@health.qld.gov.au))

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees

*Amount:* up to \$125,000

*Time:* up to two years from 1 January 2027; up to 3 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Grant.

#### 6.1.7 **Program Grants**

*Purpose:* To sustain a substantial program of research aligned with MSH strategic objectives and community needs. Research proposals demonstrating collaborations across departments, disciplines, sites, and with our university partners and consumers will be highly regarded. The research team must include a HDR student or novice or early career researcher as a co-investigator, mentored by the principal investigator.

*Applicant eligibility:* MSH employees

*Amount:* up to \$350,000

*Time:* up to three years from 1 January 2027

## 6.2 **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR METRO SOUTH SERTA FUNDED GRANTS**

### 6.2.1 **Applicant eligibility**

- i. The applicant is the Principal Investigator.
- ii. MSH SERTA Operational Rules require the applicant to be a MSH employee at the time of applying and for the duration of the grant.
- iii. Honorary appointees are not eligible to be the applicant.
- iv. Conjoint appointees are not eligible to be the applicant if their sole employment contract is with a university partner – even in cases where MSH pays the university for part of the conjoint appointee’s salary. Conjoint appointees may still benefit from the RSS as an eligible co-investigator.
- v. Previous recipients of an RSS grant are ineligible to apply if the related study does not have ethics and governance approvals, including a fully executed research agreement if required.
- vi. Previous recipients of an RSS grant are ineligible to apply if they have an overdue or incomplete RSS Final Report.
- vii. It is the responsibility of the applicant to understand the implications of applying for or accepting RSS funding in respect to any other related arrangement in which they

are named, for example HDR program rules or Funding Agreement terms and conditions.

### 6.2.2 **Research team eligibility**

Eligible co-investigators and associate investigators can be:

- i. MSH employees with a MSH appointment for the duration of the grant,
- ii. an employee of a MSH partner university or research institute based on a MSH campus, with an appointment for the duration of the grant,
- iii. employees of other Hospital and Health Services, research institutes, universities, and organisations relevant to the conduct of the proposed research,
- iv. consumer partners.

### 6.2.3 **Other eligibility criteria**

- i. The majority of the proposed research activity must take place on a MSH campus, facility or service.
- ii. The proposed research activities must not be concurrently funded by any other organisation.
- iii. The research should align with MSH RSS objectives, demonstrating cross-disciplinary collaborations (for example, across medical, allied health, nursing, basic/clinical research professions), multi-site collaborations and collaborations with our academic partners.
- iv. A maximum of two RSS **Project Grants** may be held concurrently by the applicant, as the principal investigator. Applicants already holding multiple RSS Project Grants are eligible to apply for an additional RSS Project Grant in the final year (including any approved extensions) of an existing Project Grant, and only if a successful application and offer of a 2027 RSS Project Grant would result in their holding no more than two Project Grants at 1 January 2027.
- v. Recipients of RSS **Program Grant** funding from a previous year cannot apply for an additional Program Grant until the final year (including any approved extensions) of the existing Program Grant.
- vi. For an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Grant**, the research focus must specifically relate to improving the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

## 6.3 **CO-FUNDED COLLABORATION GRANTS**

MSH SERTA is partnering with Griffith University Health Group (Griffith Health), Queensland University of Technology Faculty of Health (QUT FOH), University of Queensland Faculty of Health, Medicine, and Behavioural Sciences (UQ HMBS) to co-fund small grants valued at \$50K each for expenditure over two years.

The aim is to drive collaborative approaches to delivering health care solutions with funding for new or existing collaborations between researchers, clinicians, scientists, and academics from the participating organisations. The research activity can be conducted across partner locations however the application must clearly describe a genuine and active collaboration and demonstrate strong ties to MSH priorities, RSS objectives and potential to translate into benefits for patients, the Health Service, and the community.

Griffith Health, QUT FOH, and UQ HMBS will each fund up to two grants with MSH SERTA.

MSH is the administering institution for the grant.

## **6.4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CO-FUNDED COLLABORATION GRANTS**

### **6.4.1 Applicant eligibility**

- i. The applicant must be a MSH employee at the time of applying and for the duration of the grant.
- ii. Honorary appointees are not eligible to be the applicant.
- iii. Conjoint appointees are not eligible to be the applicant if their sole employment contract is with a university partner – even in cases where MSH pays the university for part of the conjoint appointee’s salary.
- iv. Previous recipients of an RSS grant are ineligible to apply if the related study does not have ethics and governance approvals, including a fully executed research agreement if required.
- v. Previous recipients of an RSS grant are ineligible to apply if they have an overdue or incomplete RSS Final Report.

### **6.4.2 Research team eligibility**

- i. The research project must be co-led by a co-investigator with a paid appointment at Griffith Health, QUT FOH, UQ HMBS.
- ii. The research team does not need to be limited to the applicant and co-lead. Additional research team members can be listed as co-investigators and associate investigators.
- iii. The university co-lead must secure approval from their institution via the Certification form on page 21 of this document.

## **6.5 PA RESEARCH FOUNDATION FUNDING**

The PA Research Foundation’s focus in 2027 is to support novice and early-career clinician researchers employed by MSH.

Following the evaluation of eligible applications submitted to the 2027 MSH RSS, the Foundation will review and select those most closely aligned with the Foundation’s priorities and donor interests. An unspecified number of grants may be awarded to novice or early-career clinician researchers across any RSS category.

The Foundation will prioritise clinically led, innovative translational research that involves multidisciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaborations and demonstrates a vision beyond the initial application. The research must be conducted within a MSH facility and must be led by a novice or early-career researcher.

Foundation funding is intended to initiate new projects and explore ideas outside established research pathways. Priority will be given to projects with the potential to challenge existing paradigms, generate new lines of investigation, and contribute to the prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions in the community.

Projects may include the development of new methods, technologies, techniques, systems, or applications, provided they have the potential to generate impactful new knowledge and improve health care delivery. While innovative and potentially high-risk ideas are encouraged, all proposals must be supported by a clear and sound rationale.

## 7. FUNDING AMOUNTS, DURATION, INDICATIVE NUMBER OF GRANTS OFFERED

Grant type	\$ value (up to)	Funding period (up to)	Indicative # grants offered
Novice Researcher Grants	30K	2 years	7
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Novice Researcher Grant	30K	3 years	1
Early Career Researcher Grants	100K	2 years	3
Research Fellowship	200K	3 years	1
MSH Future Research Leader Fellowship	300K	3 years	1
Project Grants	125K	2 years	11
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Grant	125K	3 years	1
Program Grant	350K	3 years	1
Co-funded Collaboration Grants	50K	2 years	6

## 8. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 8.1 APPLICATION TIMEFRAME

The 2027 MSH RSS opens Monday 1 June 2026 and closes at 3pm Monday 27 July 2026. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the 8-week window to engage with stakeholders early to ensure the application can be submitted well in advance of the deadline.

### 8.2 APPLICATION FORM

Applications for 2027 MSH RSS grants must be prepared using the online form available on *SmartyGrants* at: <http://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/>. A help guide is available here: <https://applicanthehelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>.

Multiple users can contribute to completing the online form by creating a *SmartyFile* account specific to your research group in *SmartyGrants*. Please contact the Senior Research Grants Officer before creating a *SmartyFile* account.

Applicants can delegate completion and submission of the online form to another person but as the Principal Investigator, the applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring the application is complete and submitted by the deadline.

#### 8.2.1 Research proposal

A research proposal of no more than 8 pages\* including references and with the following headings and format must be uploaded as part of your *SmartyGrants* application:

Headings:

- Applicant name
- Project title
- Background
- Aims/Objectives
- Hypothesis
- Methodology
- Data management and analysis plan
- Milestones, every 6 months for the duration of the project
- Expected outcome/s
- References.

Formatting:

- Maximum 8 pages incl references
- Arial font 10
- Line spacing 1.5
- Top, bottom, left and right page margins 2cm

\*The Research Proposal document can be any number of pages, but no more than 8 pages.

### 8.2.2 Certification

The certification form on page 20 of these Funding Guidelines, must be uploaded as part of your *SmartyGrants* application:

- The Head of Department (HoD) is required to sign the certification page. Allow sufficient time to gain the HoD signature, or escalation of the signature if the HoD is involved in the research. If you are unsure of who can sign the certification page or if you are experiencing issues securing the signature, please contact the Senior Research Grants Officer at [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) for guidance well in advance of the deadline.
- For a **Novice Researcher Grant** application, the Researcher Supervisor is also required to sign the certification form on page 20.

Additionally, for a **Co-funded Collaboration Grant** application, the CI from the partner university must submit the certification form on page 21 to their Research Office for signature.

### 8.2.3 Submission of application

Applications must be submitted via the MSH *SmartyGrants* site:

<https://metrosouth.smartygrants.com.au/>

- no later than 3pm on Monday 27 July 2026
- late applications will not be accepted unless approved in accordance with 8.2.4
- incomplete, emailed or hand delivered applications will not be accepted

### 8.2.4 Requests to accept a late application

Applicants and application teams are strongly encouraged to ensure a complete application is ready for submission at least 1 or 2 days before the deadline to mitigate last minute issues that could result in missing the deadline.

Requests to submit an application after the deadline will not be considered, except where there is a case for exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- unforeseeable
- beyond the applicant's control
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Examples of circumstances that will be considered include situations where:

- the applicant, or a member of their immediate family experiences a medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death, or hospital admission
- the applicant is affected by an unanticipated disaster, for example a fire or earthquake
- an unplanned power and/or internet network outage widely affects multiple users.

Examples of circumstances that will not be considered include:

- inability to secure head of department signature due to workload or availability
- technical or system issues experienced at the last minute
- events that could be managed or resolved either by the applicant or another application team member within the application period.

Requests to submit an application after the deadline due to exceptional circumstances must be emailed to [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) within 24 hours of the published submission deadline, along with a copy of the complete application.

The decision to accept an application after the deadline or not is at the sole discretion of the designated decision maker (see 13.1) and will be made on a case-by-case basis following consultation with the RSS Probity Advisor, the Chair of MSH Research Grants Committee, and others as considered relevant.

Notwithstanding, applicants and application teams should endeavour to have a completed application submitted well in advance of the published deadline, acknowledging the decision may be to not accept the application.

### **8.3 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

- 8.3.1 Applicants seeking to participate in the MSH RSS must comply with these Funding Guidelines, instructions in the application, and with MSH policies and procedures located at: <http://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/rss> and <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/research/about-us/policies-and-procedures>
- 8.3.2 Applicants must be the Principal Investigator.
- 8.3.3 Applicants may apply for more than one category of funding however applications must not be for the same project (identified through similar aims, research teams and/or activities). Identical research proposals submitted to multiple categories of funding will be deemed ineligible.
- 8.3.4 Applicants may submit a maximum of two applications per category.
- 8.3.5 The MSH Research Grants Committee strongly discourages the practice of experienced researchers making multiple applications in the names of dependent researchers.
- 8.3.6 When preparing the research proposal, applicants must adhere to the formatting requirements specified in the application form. This includes number of pages, headings, font size/type, line spacing and page margins. Research proposals that do not comply with formatting requirements may be withdrawn from assessment.
- 8.3.7 All details in the application must be current and accurate at the time of submission.
- 8.3.8 Once submitted, the application will be considered final, and no changes will be permitted without the prior written consent of the RSS Sub-Committee.

### **8.4 BUDGET PREPARATION**

- 8.4.1 The applicant should consult with the Metro South Research Finance team ([MSH\\_RES\\_FIN@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH_RES_FIN@health.qld.gov.au)) to build an appropriate budget, particularly for the

calculation of salaries and on-costs. Please make contact early to help this team manage the anticipated demand for assistance. Last minute requests for assistance will be difficult to accommodate.

- 8.4.2 A [budget template tool](#) is available on the Metro South Research website.
- 8.4.3 Funding may only be applied to the activities and budget described in the submitted application.
- 8.4.4 MSH will administer the grant. Where it is proposed in the application budget for funding to be applied to services or activities provided by employees of universities or other organisations external to Metro South, the party can submit a detailed invoice to MSH following completion of the service or activity to recover their costs (i.e., invoice in arrears).

## 8.5 ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- 8.5.1 Eligible budget items are those that are essential and directly related to conducting the research activities proposed in the application within the grant period. For example, salary or back-fill including standard on-costs for project staff, consumables and services required specifically for the activities described in the application, reimbursements for participants and consumer remuneration, minor equipment dedicated and essential to the specific project, specialised software or computers, conference and publication costs.
- 8.5.2 Ineligible budget items include overheads, maintenance and levies for equipment, items that are for the purpose of day-to-day operations of the organisation, major clinical equipment that would otherwise be procured through an operational budget.
- 8.5.3 For a **Research Fellowship** funding must be applied to the applicant's salary or back-fill of the applicant, at a minimum 0.1 FTE for the duration of the grant. Additionally, Fellowship funding can be used for eligible project consumables and/or eligible equipment. The total funding including salary and non-labour expenditure is up to \$200K.
- 8.5.4 For a **MSH Future Research Leader Fellowship** funding must be applied to the applicant's salary or back-fill of the applicant, at a minimum 0.2 FTE for the duration of the grant. Additionally, MSH Future Research Leader Fellowship funding can be used for research assistant salary and/or eligible project consumables and/or eligible equipment. The total funding including salaries and non-labour expenditure is up to \$300K.
- 8.5.5 MSH SERTA funding cannot be applied to HDR scholarship stipends.

## 8.6 CLINICAL TRIALS

Where a MSH-sponsored clinical trial is proposed, the applicant must ensure adequate resources are available to enable sponsor responsibilities, including trial monitoring costs where applicable. Funding awarded to a project does not constitute approval for Metro South Health to act as the study sponsor. Sponsorship is determined separately through the MSH Sponsorship Committee process. See [Research administration and compliance - Clinical Trials Guideline](#) and [Metro South Health Sponsorship of Clinical Trial Notification scheme trials](#).

## 8.7 CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Genuine and meaningful consumer and community involvement (CCI) in research requires early engagement. Health Translation Queensland has developed the [Framework for CCI in Health Research](#) as a 'good practice' guide. The MSH Research website also provides guidance and resources about involving community and consumers in your research: <https://www.metrosoth.health.qld.gov.au/research/support-for-researchers/how-to-partner-with-consumers-in-research>.

## 8.8 THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The following resources provide guidance for applicants and application teams on appropriate use of AI in developing your grant application:

- Metro South Health - [Safe Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Factsheet](#)
- Queensland Health (QHEPS link) - [Safe use of generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) - Cyber Security](#)
- NHMRC - [Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Grants Applications and Peer Review](#)

Applicants will be required to disclose the use of AI in the application.

## 9. EVALUATION PLAN

Grant applications will be evaluated by the RSS Sub-Committee, for the purpose of recommending fundable grant applications to the funding bodies. The RSS Sub-Committee is comprised of members of the Metro South Research Grants Committee, facility Research Committee's, Metro South Research Council, Metro South clinicians and researchers, and researchers from our partner institutions and other organisations.

An assessment panel for each grant category will be formed from the membership of the RSS Sub-Committee. Members of the RSS Sub-Committee are assigned to the panel in which they have declared they are without a substantive conflict of interest. Conflict of interest is managed in consultation with an independent Probity Advisor and according to the Metro South [Research Support and Management – MSH Research Support Scheme work instruction](#).

Applicants should understand that members of the RSS Sub-Committee bring broad and specialist knowledge to the assessment of health and medical research grant applications, however your application may not be assessed by an expert in your exact field.

### 9.1 EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Applicants have the option to provide the contact details of up to three external experts, all of whom must be acknowledged experts in the field of work proposed (i.e., publication track record and PhD or equivalent research experience). Should additional expert opinion be required during the evaluation period a panel lead may engage an expert selected by the panel or engage the applicant's nominated external expert. The expert will only be asked specific questions raised by the panel and will not be asked to score the application. **Nominating an external expert is optional**, however if nominating an expert/s the applicant must contact the expert prior to submitting the application to confirm the expert's availability and willingness to be contacted by the RSS. Complete contact details of all experts must be provided.

Nominated experts must be independent of all members of the investigative team, external to MSH and the university school/research institutes of all named investigators, and without conflict of interest. Each external expert will need to complete a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration form prior to receiving any applications. To that end, the applicant should:

- i. avoid nomination of experts with whom any of the investigative team have a personal relationship (including but not limited to those of family, friends, and associates with whom the investigator would socialise outside a work context) or who are employed by the same organisation as any of the investigators that appear on the application, or with whom a supervisory/subordinate work relationship has existed.
- ii. avoid nomination of experts with whom investigators have current or previous (within the past five years) collaborations on research, grant applications, publications, or cooperative agreements. If the applicant wishes to nominate an expert with whom they have

collaborated in the past 5 years they must contact the [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) or 3443 8057 and ask for consideration of their nominated expert, giving reasons why they should be included.

- iii. declare to their line manager and to the Executive Director, Metro South Research any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the experts they nominate on the application.
- iv. ask co-investigators and associate investigators to review the experts nominated on the application and declare to any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the reviewers.

## 9.2 INITIAL ASSESSMENT FOR COMPLETENESS AND ELIGIBILITY

Following the submission deadline, an initial administrative assessment of completeness and eligibility is undertaken by the Senior Research Grants Officer. An application may be considered incomplete or ineligible to progress to evaluation in circumstances including, but not limited to the following:

- The Research proposal document is over 8 pages and/or does not use the required headings
- Certification pages are unsigned or not uploaded.

## 10. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTING

### 10.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications are assessed by panel members, against five evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria	What is the RSS looking for in an application?
1. Research quality and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Research proposal document that is cohesive, with clearly stated aims, methodology and proposed outcomes.</li> <li>• A sound rationale for conducting the research, relevant to MSHHS.</li> <li>• Evidence that the proposed research is original or has a point of difference from existing knowledge.</li> <li>• Study design and methodology that support the aims and proposed outcomes.</li> <li>• Where relevant, evidence of consultation with a Biostatistician.</li> <li>• Sample size and analysis plan appropriate for meaningful outcomes.</li> <li>• Evidence that the project be completed in the timeframe.</li> <li>• Novice researchers will be assessed on a sound project idea and methodology, good understanding of the research area, easily achievable within the timeframe, as well as the nominated research supervisor’s suitability to support the applicant.</li> </ul>
2. Significance to Metro South community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research addresses a clinical need, evidence gap, or issue of importance to MSHHS.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research will have impact on burden of disease and deliver meaningful outcomes for the community.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research considers health equity for priority population groups, and the high and medium priority needs</li> </ul>

	<p>of the Metro South community (Brisbane South Joint Regional Needs Assessment 2025 – 2027).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research aligns with the RSS funding principles, target groups/research areas, objectives, and intents contained in the individual grant category descriptions at Sections 6.1, 6.3 and 6.5.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Clinical impact</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research will contribute to advancements in knowledge that will inform clinical practice or health policy.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed research has potential to deliver solutions that have a positive impact for patient care and/or health service delivery.</li> <li>• Where relevant, evidence of an implementation and evaluation plan.</li> <li>• For basic science projects, articulation of a translation pathway.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Collaborative Strength and Capacity building</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of individual team members expertise and contribution to their field of research.</li> <li>• The extent to which there is a diversity of research skills and experience through meaningful collaborations across disciplines and with partners.</li> <li>• Clear description of an active role and responsibility for each team member.</li> <li>• The potential for the collaboration to build research capacity and strengthen the research profile of MSH.</li> <li>• Evidence of consultation and meaningful engagement with community representatives and consumers.</li> <li>• For a Future Research Leader Fellowship, the description of how the applicant’s experience, skills, attributes as an emerging exemplary researcher, leadership qualities and commitment to the organisation will contribute to research collaboration and capacity building for MSH.</li> <li>• For Program Grants, the description of how the inclusion of a novice, early career, or HDR student will contribute to research capacity and capability building for MSH.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Budget and feasibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget items that are appropriately costed, reasonable, and justified.</li> <li>• Evidence of adequate consideration to resources required to complete the project.</li> <li>• Evidence of adequate consultation with stakeholders including the research partners, a head of department and research finance team.</li> <li>• Evidence of adequate consideration of possible difficulties and possible solutions.</li> <li>• Represents value for investment.</li> </ul>

## 10.2 WEIGHTING

The evaluation criteria are weighted as follows:

	1	2	3	4	5
Grant type	Research quality and design	Significance to MSH community	Clinical impact	Collaborative strength and Capacity building	Budget and feasibility
Novice Researcher	40%	15%	5%	25%	15%
Early Career Researcher	40%	15%	5%	25%	15%
Fellowships	25%	20%	15%	30%	10%
Project Grants	35%	20%	15%	20%	10%
Program Grants	35%	20%	15%	20%	10%
Co-funded Collaboration Grants	35%	20%	10%	25%	10%

## 10.3 SCORING

Each of the evaluation criteria will be scored by panel members on a scale of 1 to 7, where:

**7 = Outstanding;** of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Comprehensively aligned with the objectives of the grant opportunity (GO). Comprehensive responses to the criteria.

**6 = Excellent;** of high quality and strongly competitive. Strongly aligned with the objectives of the GO. Strong responses to the criteria.

**5 = Very good;** interesting, sound and compelling. Feasible. Mostly aligned with the objectives of the GO. Responses sufficiently address the criteria.

**4 = Good;** sound, feasible, but lacks a compelling element. Some gaps in responses to the criteria.

**3 = Fair;** several weaknesses. Responses are cursory or lacking detail.

**2 = Unsatisfactory;** has significant weaknesses, not recommended for funding.

**1 = No evidence;** not fundable.

Panel members complete this process online, via *SmartyGrants*. A final weighted score is calculated, reflecting the relative strength of the application in terms of how well it addresses and meets the evaluation criteria.

## 11. RANKING AND RECOMMENDATION

Applications in each category are ranked in preliminary order, determined by the panel's ranked and averaged weighted score, and provided to the panel for review.

## 11.1 PANEL MODERATION MEETING

Each panel will meet to discuss the outcomes of their assessments. The panel may determine a ranking of applications that is not based solely on initial scores, acknowledging that in addressing disparate scores panel members may agree to alter their scores based on discussions in the moderation meeting. Panel leads may request an additional assessment of an application if panel member's scores are markedly disparate.

All applications will be determined to be fundable or otherwise. The panel may, at its discretion, determine an application is not for funding if alignment with RSS objectives and evaluation criteria has not been demonstrated or compliance with RSS Funding Guidelines has not been met.

Following moderation, the PA Research Foundation Board will identify assessed applications most suited to Foundation funding.

## 11.2 GRANT RECOMMENDATION MEETING

The RSS Sub-Committee will meet at a Grants Recommendation Meeting in October 2026, overseen by a chairperson external to MSH who is without conflict of interest.

Assessment and moderation information will be presented by the Panel members for each category of grants to the Chairperson for the purpose of establishing the final ranking of applications.

If multiple applications in any grant category obtain equal scores, the RSS Sub-Committee will determine a ranking and order of merit, based on assessment by members present.

Final ranking and recommendations for awarding of grants may include, but is not limited to, consideration of:

- RSS Funding Principles and Target groups/research areas
- Alignment of the application with RSS objectives.
- RSS evaluation criteria
- Reviewer scores and panel moderation comments
- Applicants' previous performance in relation to previous RSS grants.
- Applicant's compliance with previous RSS grant conditions.

To be clear, the final ranking and recommendations for awarding of grants might differ from the ranking based solely on scores derived from assessment against the evaluation criteria.

If approved funds cannot be fully allocated in any one category, the RSS Sub-Committee may recommend reappropriation of funds to another grant category.

The RSS Sub-Committee may consider the need to balance the recommendations for funding in line with the RSS Funding Principles.

At the conclusion of the Grants Recommendation Meeting the recommendations of the RSS Sub-Committee will be provided to the relevant delegate of each funding body for approval.

## 12. AWARDING OF GRANTS

Recommendations for funding will be considered by the relevant delegate of each funding body, who make the final decision on the award of grants. The funding bodies and their delegates may, at their sole discretion, choose to award grants on the basis of the recommendations received, or not.

Award of grants will be via a letter of offer, accompanied by grant conditions. Prospective grant recipients will be required to accept the offer and conditions in writing by the date identified in the grant letter of offer.

The grant can only be applied to the activities and budget described in the submitted application.

## **12.1 SECOND ROUND OFFERS**

If an offer of funding is declined, unallocated funds may be used to enable an offer of funding to the next application identified as meritorious in any category by the RSS Sub-Committee.

## **13. PROBITY**

The MSH RSS is developed in consultation with the MSH Research Grants Committee and an independent Probity Advisor. The aim is to ensure RSS processes are consistent, transparent, defensible and fair to all applicants.

### **13.1 ISSUES/DISPUTES**

Issues and concerns about MSH RSS processes or outcomes should be directed to the Senior Research Grants Officer at [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) in the first instance.

The MSH Director, Research Development is the designated decision maker for resolution of issues or disputes related to the RSS and will manage issues or disputes in consultation with the Probity Advisor, Chair of MSH Research Grants Committee and other appropriate persons as necessary.

### **13.2 FEEDBACK**

Feedback on MSH RSS processes or outcomes can be directed to the Senior Research Grants Officer at [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) and will be tabled at a Metro South Research Grants Committee meeting for consideration and action as necessary.

## **14. POST-AWARD REPORTING**

### **14.1 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

An Annual HREC/RGO Progress Report must be submitted to the approving HREC as a condition of holding an RSS grant. If the approving HREC is Metro South, the Annual Progress Report is submitted via ERM by 30 April each year.

### **14.2 FINAL REPORT**

A Final Report including financial acquittal will be required within 4 months of the end date of the grant. A Final Report template will be sent via your SmartyGrants account. A grant balance reported at this time will be returned to the funding body/bodies.

## **15. POST-AWARD VARIATIONS**

Requests to extend the end date of the grant or vary the budget at any time during the grant period must be submitted in writing to [MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MSH-Grants@health.qld.gov.au) for approval by the MSH Chief Research and Innovation Officer.

## 16. CERTIFICATION

This page must be signed by an appropriate delegate for the Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI) and uploaded as part of the online application.

Applicant (PI) name:
Project title:

### 16.1 CERTIFICATION BY APPLICANT'S HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/DIVISION

I certify that:

- **I am not the applicant/PI, or an investigator named on this application.** Note: *if the Head of Department is named in the application, they cannot provide certification, and the signature must be escalated to the next appropriate delegate (eg. Divisional Director).*
- **I have been provided with details of this grant application,** including the proposed activities, resources and arrangements, and having considered the implications for service delivery I am prepared to have the project carried out in my Department/Division.

Name of Head of Department/Division (print):
Position title:
MSH site:
Signature:
Date: DD/MM/YEAR

### 16.2 CERTIFICATION BY RESEARCH SUPERVISOR (Novice Researcher applications only)

I certify that:

- I have been provided with details of the proposed research and I am willing and have the capacity to supervise and provide expert guidance to the applicant for the duration of the project.
- I understand the requirements of supervision as detailed in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and [Supervision A guide supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and commit to providing supervision in accordance with these documents.

Name of Research Supervisor (print):
MSH site/university/organisation:
Position title:
Signature:
Date: DD/MM/YEAR

## 17. CERTIFICATION – CO-FUNDED COLLABORATION GRANTS

This page must be signed by the appropriate delegate at Griffith University Health Group, Queensland University of Technology Faculty of Health, or University of Queensland Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Sciences for the CI and uploaded as part of the online application.

CI name (print):
CI organisation:
CI position:
Project title:

### 17.1 CERTIFICATION BY UNIVERSITY AUTHORISED DELEGATE

I certify that:

- The CI named above has an appointment with this organisation and meets the other eligibility criteria.
- I have been provided with details of the proposed research, consider it appropriate to the aims and objectives of the funding program.
- I am not the applicant, or an investigator named on this application.
- Should this application be successful I acknowledge our organisation has agreed to co-fund this grant.

Authorised delegate name (print):
Organisation:
Position title:
Signature:
Date: DD/MM/YEAR