DEMENTIA GRANTS PROGRAM

ROUND 2: PhD SCHOLARSHIPS

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS
2019
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This document contains important information for applicants regarding the process of applying for, and the eligibility conditions of, the 2019 Dementia Australia Research Foundation PhD Scholarships.

Applicants should read all the information included in this document and liaise with their host institution’s research office before contacting the Foundation with any queries regarding the application process or eligibility conditions.

Key Dates
- **Applications Open:** 2 September 2019 (9.00 am AEST)
- **Applications Close:** 11 October 2019 (5.00 pm AEDT)

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

- **Outcomes Announced:** December 2019
- **Funding Commences:** January to March 2020, or by arrangement

INTRODUCTION

The information in this booklet is designed to help those intending to apply for funding through the Dementia Australia Research Foundation PhD Scholarships. Applicants should read this document thoroughly to understand the grant conditions and application procedure. In most cases the answers to ‘frequently asked questions’ are covered in this document. Any unanswered questions can be put in writing to foundation@dementia.org.au.

The Dementia Australia Research Foundation (DARF) is the research arm of Dementia Australia. The Foundation provides funding to support new and emerging dementia researchers, works with people with dementia and carers to ensure that research reflects their concerns and promotes understanding and awareness of dementia research among the general community. The Foundation is entirely funded by donations and support from members of the public and Australian businesses and is managed by Dementia Australia (Barton Office). Further information about the Foundation including previous grant rounds and outcomes can be found at: https://www.dementia.org.au/research.

OVERVIEW – 2019 DEMENTIA GRANTS PROGRAM

The total value of the 2019 Dementia Grants Program is $1.5 million and is split over two funding rounds:

- Round 1: Project Grants (closed 12 August 2019)
- Round 2: PhD Scholarships
Up to four, PhD Scholarships are on offer in Round 2 for new students, enrolled or intending to enrol in a research PhD.

DEMENTIA AUSTRALIA RESEARCH FOUNDATION – PhD SCHOLARSHIPS

Purpose

Research needs bright and talented scientists to focus on the growing challenge dementia poses to current and future generations of Australians. The purpose of the Dementia Australia Research Foundation – PhD Scholarship scheme is to build capacity in the dementia field by supporting talented students to embark on a career in dementia research.

Please note that the Dementia Australia Research Foundation will not consider projects that significantly overlap with existing in-house projects of Dementia Australia, or projects that do not align with the mission of Dementia Australia.

Examples of the types of research projects funded in the past can be found on the Foundation’s website: https://www.dementia.org.au/research/our-researchers.

Topic and Scope

The Dementia Australia Research Foundation PhD Scholarships are open to Australian-based students undertaking projects across all forms of dementia and in any topic area; biomedical (lab-based), clinical, psychosocial, or knowledge translation research projects will be considered. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Gaining a better understanding of the causes of dementia.
- Developing strategies to reduce dementia risk and slow the progression of the disease.
- Providing accurate and timely diagnoses.
- Improving treatment and care options for people living with dementia.
- Increasing the awareness and understanding of rights, needs and experiences of people with dementia, their carers and families.
- Finding a cure for dementia.

Project Team

The individuals applying for funds must have appropriate academic credentials and appropriate strength in their proposal and supervisory team. We encourage applications from multi-disciplinary teams including scientists, biotechnology, health professionals and public health researchers. It is highly recommended that people living with dementia, their carers and families are involved throughout the project.
Award Funding

Each PhD Scholarship is worth $30,000 p.a. and may be used over three years. Funding may be extended for a period of 6 months in exceptional circumstances only.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for a PhD Scholarship:

1. At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant, the Applicant must be an Australian citizen, New Zealand citizen living in Australia or a permanent resident of Australia. All applicants must provide evidence to their host institution to support this criterion. Host institutions are responsible for certifying and ensuring that these requirements are met. The Dementia Australia Research Foundation may request further information in relation to these requirements, including evidence of residency and/or citizenship.

2. The Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time research PhD at an Australian university or show that they have made arrangements to undertake a full-time PhD in research at an Australian university. Part-time PhD students are not eligible for the PhD Scholarship.

Applicants who are currently enrolled in a PhD are encouraged to apply. However, the Foundation may, at its sole discretion, provide funding for the time remaining on the applicant’s candidature only. For example, an applicant who has completed 6 months of a full-time PhD program is eligible for 2.5 years of scholarship funding. Upon commencement of the award, the applicant must not have completed more than 50% of their PhD program.

3. The Applicant must have written agreement of a qualified supervisor and the support of an Australian university to carry out the proposed project.

4. The research must be conducted in Australia and address the topic and scope of the funding round.

5. The Applicant must follow the guidelines of the host institution regarding paid work hours during their PhD (e.g. some Australian universities permit 10-20 hours paid work per week or additional salary up to 75% of the Scholarship).

6. The Applicant must not hold another scholarship (i.e. the scholarship cannot be used as a top-up scholarship).

7. The research must be approved by an authorised ethics committee, if applicable.
Further, the Applicant must demonstrate that:

1. People with dementia, their carers and families and the wider public (if appropriate) have been or are involved throughout the project (beyond a role as participants). This may be achieved in any number of ways including:

   a. Consultation about the research proposal – to ensure that it addresses an identified area of priority for them.

   b. Inclusion as joint grant holders or co-applicants on your research proposal.

   c. Membership of a Steering Committee or Advisory Group or as a ‘research buddy’ for the researcher.

   d. Providing comment on and/or developing patient information leaflets or other research materials.

   e. Involvement in the dissemination of research outcomes and the development of plain language project summaries.

Further information on involving members of the public in research is available here.

2. Appropriate language and terminology is used throughout the application. For example, many people with dementia prefer not to be referred to directly or indirectly as a ‘dementia sufferer’. A guide to dementia-friendly language is available at https://www.dementia.org.au/resources/dementia-language-guidelines.

Resubmission of previous applications

Applicants are welcome to resubmit previously unsuccessful applications, which will be assessed on their merits alongside all other applications. It should be noted, however, that the Dementia Grants Program is becoming increasingly competitive, and applications who have been unsuccessful in previous years are very unlikely to progress to the final stages of assessment in subsequent years, unless substantial improvements have been made with respect to the assessment criteria.

Notification of additional funding

Applicants must notify the Dementia Australia Research Foundation if they receive scholarship funding from another source for a project that is the subject of a PhD Scholarship application to the Foundation.

Acknowledgement of support

Successful applicants must acknowledge the support of the Dementia Australia Research Foundation and its funding partners in all publications, presentations, summary findings and media announcements relating to the research. Grantees must also provide progress reports
on the research and be prepared to assist the Dementia Australia Research Foundation, if required, by speaking at functions, attending specified conferences, hosting laboratory visits, or being featured in media articles/releases.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

**Online application form**

Applications must be submitted online via an application portal available through the Dementia Australia Research Foundation website (https://www.dementia.org.au/research/grants). The portal will close at the advertised closing date, after which applicants will not be able to upload or modify any part of their application.

To start an application, applicants will click on the link that corresponds to the award that they are applying for. Please note that you will be asked to create an account prior to completing the online application form. Log-in details will be sent to the email address you provide.

To ensure that all relevant information is entered, each page of the application form needs to be completed in full before moving onto the next. A template may be downloaded from the website at https://www.dementia.org.au/research/grants/information-for-applicants to work on the application offline and to view each section of the application form.

If applicants experience technical errors when uploading an application, they can contact foundation@dementia.org.au.

Late applications, and applications sent by mail or email will not be accepted.

The online application form includes a number of required fields, such as:

- Details of the applicant and supervisors on the research team (up to 3 supervisors are permitted on the application form)
- Contact details of the host institution
- Project title
- Abstract (200 word limit)
- How research findings will be translated into practice (250 word limit)
- Lay project summary (200 word limit)
- Implications of the research (250 word limit)
- How people living with dementia, their carers, families and/or the wider public will be involved in the research (250 word limit)

When planning research in which people with dementia will be participants, applicants should make sure that they are familiar with the principles of and requirements for getting informed consent from people who may lack cognitive and/or legal capacity to provide written informed consent themselves.
If the application proposes to involve Dementia Australia staff or our dementia advocates in the project in an advisory capacity, this must be discussed with the Foundation prior to submitting the application.

Supporting documents and required attachments

As well as completing the online application form, applicants must provide the following supporting documents (in PDF format) on the application portal. Applications that do not include the required documentation will be considered ineligible and will not be assessed. Please note that attachments cannot be amended or added to the application after the application closing date.

1. **Evidence of Australian or New Zealand citizenship, permanent residency or appropriate work visa (required for Applicant)**
   Provide a scanned copy of a birth certificate, passport, visa documentation or official documentation from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to your host institution (you are not required to upload this information into the online portal). Statutory Declarations, Medicare cards, Australian driver's licences or other documents will not be accepted as proof of permanent residency or citizenship.

2. **Copy of official academic transcripts**
   A scanned copy of academic transcripts. Applicants who are currently completing an honours degree at the time of application must provide their final grade to the Foundation as soon as this becomes available.

3. **Academic CV (maximum 10 pages)**
   Include publications, grants (funding body, amount and investigator status), awards, conference presentations and service to the academic community.

4. **Research Proposal**
   The Research Proposal should not exceed 5 pages (not including references), with a minimum font size of 11 and standard margins. Any additional pages, or any explanatory appendices, will not be assessed. You are permitted to include figures and tables. Descriptions for figures may be in size 10 font. The research proposal should include details on each of the following sections:

   a. **Aims**: List specific aims and potential significance of the project. Clearly state the research question and hypothesis to be tested, as well as the rationale and objectives of the project.

   b. **Background**: Summarise previous work in this field, which provides the basis for the proposed research project.

   c. **Research Methodology**: Include a clear description of methods and design, including the following, if applicable: participant recruitment strategy; participant inclusion/exclusion criteria; study design; intervention or manipulation; outcome measures; statistical analysis plan and rationale; safety and risk considerations; drug regimens; and special equipment or measures.

   d. **Key references**: Please include a list of up to 20 key references cited in the proposal.
5. **Ethics Approval** (if available)

   Evidence of approval of the proposed project by an authorised Human Research Ethics Committee, if available. If not available at time of application, funding agreements (for successful applicants) will be conditional upon ethics approval.

6. **Letter of support from principal supervisor**

   A statement from the applicant’s supervisor confirming their support for the project and the applicant (particularly if the applicant is yet to enrol in a PhD) is required. The statement should also outline what additional funding or resources, if any, the host institution or other sources will contribute to the PhD project.

7. **Endorsement Form(s) signed by:**
   - The applicant and each supervisor named in the application, confirming their contribution to the project as described in the application.
   - The Head of Administering Institution (or nominee) in which the research will take place.

   An endorsement form template is available at: https://www.dementia.org.au/research/grants/information-for-applicants.

**ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The assessment process for all grant types involves the following stages:

1. **Eligibility check**

   Foundation staff will check all applications after the application closing date to ensure compliance with eligibility criteria and conditions of the award. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they meet all eligibility criteria and conditions of the award prior to submitting an application. The Dementia Australia Research Foundation reserves the right to rule out of contention any application that does not include proof of eligibility without further assessment. Please note that applicants must inform the Dementia Australia Research Foundation if their eligibility against the stated criteria changes in any way during the assessment process. Funding will not commence until all relevant requirements, including eligibility, have been met.

2. **Review and ranking by members of the Scientific Panel**

   Members of the Scientific Panel, including members with dementia and carers, will consider and rank all applications.

   Awards are allocated to applicants in order of ranking; consideration is also made to supporting approximately equal numbers of applicants in biomedical and psychosocial research fields. Applicants whose projects are considered fundable but are not allocated
one of the available awards are placed on a reserve list and may be offered an award in the event that an applicant with a higher-ranked project turns down the award.

The final decision on awards is made by the Dementia Australia Research Foundation Board on the basis of recommendations made by the Scientific Panel.

Please be advised that all decisions are final, and there is no mechanism for appeal.

**Notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants**

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email during December 2019; unsuccessful applicants may be notified earlier in the year, depending on the stage of assessment at which the decision is made. To facilitate notification, applicants must ensure that their contact details are filled in correctly on the application form.

**Announcement of awards**

An official announcement of the 2019 award winners will be made on the Dementia Australia Research Foundation website by January 2020. This announcement will detail each successful applicant's name, type of award, project title and institution. Award winners will be expected to assist the Foundation, if required, by being featured in media articles/releases and public announcements related to an award from the Foundation.

**Feedback to unsuccessful applicants**

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with individual feedback upon request.

Feedback is provided for the purpose of helping unsuccessful applicants improve the quality of subsequent applications to the Dementia Australia Research Foundation or other funding bodies. No correspondence regarding the accuracy or merits of feedback will be entered into.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The following assessment criteria will be used for rating **PhD Scholarships** applications:

1. **Scientific Merit and Quality (30% weight)**

   The significance and value of the proposed research is considered, along with the clarity of the research objectives and the suitability of the research plan and methodology. The general scientific relevance should be evident in the project proposal, and the research methodology should be sound and clearly presented. The feasibility of the project and the roles of the supervisory team to support the project should also be considered.
2. Track record of the research team (60% weight)

This criterion considers whether the applicant’s previous research experience demonstrates they are capable of successfully undertaking the proposed research and publishing the outcomes. Track record (research training, publications, awards and other relevant experience) is to be assessed relative to opportunity. GPA score may be also considered here.

3. Innovation and Originality (10% weight)

This criterion considers the novelty and originality of the proposed research and the extent to which it has the capacity, if successful, to introduce innovative and new research directions, treatments, interventions or models of care etc. to the field.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any enquiries please visit https://www.dementia.org.au/research/grants or email: foundation@dementia.org.au.