Applying for grants & post-doctoral fellowships

Dec 2018

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Deakin University, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute

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1. Overview of main post doc funding schemes

2. About me – current role & pathway

3. Strengths & weaknesses in your track record
1. OVERVIEW OF MAIN POST DOC FUNDING SCHEMES
• Applying for post-doctoral grants is only one avenue:
  – Highly competitive

• Other options:
  – Post-doctoral (research fellow) positions on capacity building type programs e.g. Centre for Research Excellence.
  – Post-doctoral (research fellow) positions on set programs of research e.g. coordinating an existing study.
  – Associate Lecturer or Lecturer Positions - ~40% research.
  – Short term RA positions that allow you to build skills.
  – You may need to relocate...
## NHMRC FUNDING

**Investigator Grants**
- Open: 5 Dec 2018
- Final application due to DR-G: 9 Jan 2019

**Ideas Grants**
- Open: 6 March 2019
- Final application due to DR-G: 10 Apr 2019

**Synergy Grants**
- Open: 6 March 2019
- Final application due to DR-G: 3 Apr 2019

**Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS)**
- Open: 6 March 2019
- Final application due to DR-G: 10 April 2019

### Description/purpose
- **Investigator Grants**: Provide salary and research support (RSP) to outstanding researchers at all career stages.
- **Ideas Grants**: Support innovative & creative research projects addressing a specific question(s). Will fund any area of health and medical research (except clinical trials/cohort studies) from discovery to implementation.
- **Synergy Grants**: Support outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer complex questions in all areas of human health.
- **Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS)**: Support high-quality clinical trials and cohort studies that address important gaps in knowledge, leading to relevant and implementable findings for the benefit of human health.

### Duration
- **Investigator Grants**: 5 years
- **Ideas Grants**: 1-5 years
- **Synergy Grants**: 5 years
- **Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS)**: 1-5 years

### No of CIs
- **Investigator Grants**: 1
- **Ideas Grants**: 1 to 10
- **Synergy Grants**: 4 to 10
- **Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS)**: 1 to 10

### Provisional funding allocation
- **Investigator Grants**: $340-380 million
- **Ideas Grants**: $213-250 million
- **Synergy Grants**: $50 million
- **Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies (CTCS)**: $70 million
- **NHMRC Investigator Grant:**
  - Separate fellowship & research support in 1 grant for high performing researchers.
  - 5 year duration.
  - **Criteria:** 70% Track Record, 30% Knowledge Gain
## NHMRC Investigator Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator Grant</th>
<th>Investigator Grant level</th>
<th>Salary per annum (AUD)</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>RSP per annum (AUD)</th>
<th>Max terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Leadership 3 (L3)</td>
<td>$175,201</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>Allocation of $300,000, $400,000, $500,000 or $600,000 per annum as determined by overall score</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership 2 (L2)</td>
<td>$164,911</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership 1 (L1)</td>
<td>$141,474</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Emerging Leadership 2 (EL2)</td>
<td>$107,750</td>
<td>≤10 years post-PhD or equivalent</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging Leadership 1 (EL1)</td>
<td>$75,738</td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Framework for track record assessment in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Publications (35%)</th>
<th>3. Leadership (15%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 year list (taking Career Disruption into account)</td>
<td>Research programs and team leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five best publications</td>
<td>Institutional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research policy and professional leadership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research mentoring</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Research Impact (20%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Shift focus away from inputs (e.g. grants received) towards outcomes
- Future trial of bibliometric indicators
Framework for track record assessment: Impact
Research impact to be presented as a case study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of scientific reach and influence</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Healthcare cost savings</td>
<td>End-user/public engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in clinical research</td>
<td>IP development</td>
<td>Community health benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy leadership</td>
<td>Industry collaboration</td>
<td>Wellbeing of end-user and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical guidelines</td>
<td>Start-up company</td>
<td>Reducing inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Product to market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of product/intervention</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Research Quality (35%)**
  - quality of the project aims and the proposed research plan

• **Innovation and Creativity (25%)**
  - research that seeks to challenge and shift current paradigms and/or has a major impact on a health research area
  - concepts, approaches, methodologies, interventions in all Broad Research Areas
  - incremental advances
  - not only commercial innovation
  - showing what doesn’t work
  - Refer *Ideas Grant Guidelines Appendix D. Concept of Innovation and Creativity*

• **Significance (20%)**
  - extent to which the outcomes and outputs will result in advancements to the research or health area
  - not the incidence of disease

• **Feasibility (20%)**
  - Appropriateness of the applicant team and their expertise, the resources and access to additional personnel necessary for the project
  - not assessment of track record of the investigator team or preliminary data
DECRA

- Funds salary + up to $40K/yr projects
- PhD awarded last 5 years
- 3 years of funding
- National Success Rate in 2018 – 16.3%
Proposed Project Quality & Innovation (35%)

- Does the research address a significant problem?
- Is the conceptualization/theoretical framework innovative and original?
- What is the potential for the research to contribute to the Science and Research Priorities?
- Will the aims, concepts, methods & results advance knowledge?
DECRA Candidate (40%)

- Research opportunity & performance evidence (ROPE):
  - Publications
  - Competitive grants, research support
  - Recognition of research impact e.g. prizes, invited presentations, policy change.
  - Community engagement e.g. presentations, media, lay articles.
  - Contributions to research community e.g. peer review, professional associations
  - Student supervision/mentoring
- Time & capacity to undertake the proposed research
Feasibility (10%)

- Do the Project’s design, participants & requested budget create confidence in the timely & successful completion of the Project?
- Is there an existing or developing, supportive and high quality environment for this Candidate, their project and for Higher Degree students?
- Are the necessary facilities available?
Benefit & Collaboration (15%)

• Will the completed Project produce significant new knowledge and/or innovative economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian and international community?
• To what extend will the candidate build collaborations across research organisations and/or industry and/or with other disciplines?
• Alfred Deakin Fellowships, Deakin University
• Australian Rotary Health, Mental Health Post Doctoral Fellowships
• Look out for small grants!!
• **READ GRANTS OFFICE EMAILS!**
2. ABOUT ME – CURRENT ROLE & PATHWAY
MY CURRENT POSITION

• Feb 2016 - Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Clinical Psychologist

• From Jan 2019, Associate Professor

• NHMRC Career Development Fellowship (2016-2020):
  – Improving outcomes for children with ADHD: mapping developmental trajectories and developing targeted interventions

• Undergraduate & postgraduate teaching in ADHD.

• Team Leader, Health Services Research, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute
## My Research Snapshot

### Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted/published</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under review</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First/senior author</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second author</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
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### Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total funding</td>
<td>$7.0M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major CIA grants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHMRC grants</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduated from a Bachelor of Arts, UoM
- Psychology
- Criminology
Timeline

- Applied for honours everywhere!
- Accepted into Graduate Diploma of Psychology, Deakin University.

- First job in related field – casual admin assistant at Western Hospital.
- Lifeline training.
- Loved 4th year – H1 outcome.
- New job – Research Assistant/ADHD Clinic Coordinator, RCH/MCRI – 1.5 days
- Undergrad tutoring

- Applied for postgrad everywhere, all courses!
- Accepted into Ed Psych, UoM & accepted but then...
- Second round offer for DPsych Clinical Child Specialisation, UoM
Sleep Problems in Children With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Prevalence and the Effect on the Child and Family

Valerie Sung, MBBS; Harriet Hiscock, MD, FRACP, MBBS; Emma Sciberras, BA; Daryl Efron, MD, FRACP, MBBS
- CIA Grant - Mental Health Research Fellowship. Department of Human Services Mental Health and Drugs Division, Victoria, $50,000
- Unsuccessful NHMRC Early Career Fellowship Application.
- Finally graduated from my DPsych!
- First NHMRC grant as CID.
- Awarded first prize.
- **Unsuccessful NHMRC Early Career Fellowship Application.**
- FT job at MCRI:
  - 0.6 FTE coordinating a clinical trial
  - 0.4 FTE post doc on NHMRC Capacity Building Grant
- 3rd time lucky – Awarded NHMRC Early Career Research Fellowship.
- Commenced a full-time Lecturer position at Deakin.
- Transferred my NHMRC Early Career Fellowship to Deakin.
- Commenced NHMRC Career Development Fellowship – 2nd round offer!
- Promoted to Senior Lecturer.
Timeline

- Awarded veski Inspiring Women’s Fellowship.

2012 → 2013 → 2014 → 2015 → 2016 → 2017 → 2018
Timeline

- Back at work 0.8 FTE
LESSONS LEARNT

• Get your foot in the door:
  – Relevant work experience
  – Find a generous & supportive mentor
  – Small grants
  – Apply for prizes
  – Publish papers – get in early!
  – Do some teaching
  – Start a collaboration

• Don’t give up! Persistence, persistence, persistence…

• Rejection is more common than success.

• Interests may change... be flexible!
3. STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES
• For your weaknesses, what is your plan to gain this experience within the next 12 months?

• Publications
• Competitive grants, research support
• Recognition of research impact e.g. prizes, invited presentations, policy change.
• Community engagement e.g. presentations, media, lay articles.
• Contributions to research community e.g. peer review, professional associations
• Student supervision/mentoring
APPLICATION TIPS

• Need to sell yourself.
• Have your application critically reviewed by experienced people.
• Identify your weaknesses now & start working on them now.
• Generate excitement in your application – you must be funded!
• Persistence pays off.
• Proof read, proof read, proof read.
Moving towards independence as an ECR

#1 Work hard & focus on your goal(s)
#2 Publish well; quality over quantity
#3 Collaborate
#4 Network, network, network
#5 Seek the support of mentors
#6 Speak whenever possible
#7 Read literature inside out; know your stuff
#8 Write a teaching statement; develop a teaching philosophy; teach some if you can
#9 Develop a strategy; mentors can help you think ahead
#10 BELIEVE IN YOURSELF
Know you can do it.
GOOD LUCK!

Thanks to @MVEGO01 for sharing these tips with
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