

The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation Research Fellowship Guidelines 2025

This document provides information about the application process, eligibility and conditions of applying for a TPCF Foundation Research Fellowship. Further information can be obtained from Dr Rebekah Engel, Research Manager (research@tpcfoundation.org.au).

General information

1. TPCF Foundation Research Fellowships have been developed to build research capacity, sustainability and career development by supporting full time researchers on TPCF campus or in significant partnership with TPCF and its associated community programs.
2. In 2025, two streams of Fellowship will be awarded - Early Career and Open. Please refer to the eligibility criteria below. Applicants may only apply to one stream.
3. Fellowships are for three years and are not extendable or renewable. However, Fellows may reapply after their initial Fellowship has successfully been completed.
4. TPCF Foundation Research Fellowships are offered on a full-time basis. Fellowships may only be held on a part-time basis if the recipient is fulfilling family and/or carer responsibilities, and must be negotiated in advance with TPCF Foundation.
5. Research Fellowships must be used for salary and on-costs (not institutional overheads), and applicants cannot be in receipt of another Fellowship. Any shortfall in salary must be covered by the research group.
 - Stream 1: Early Career Fellowships are valued at \$110,000 p.a.
 - Stream 2: Open Fellowships are valued at \$150,000 p.a.
6. All research costs such as consumables, must be provided by the nominated research group.
7. TPCF Foundation Research Fellowships are awarded to the applicant and are not transferrable. The successful Fellow must remain within or associated with their nominated research group for the duration of the Fellowship. Any changes to circumstances must be discussed with TPCF Foundation. TPCF Foundation reserves the right to review and terminate the Fellowship if deemed appropriate.

Eligibility

1. Applicants must hold a PhD, or equivalent level 10 research qualification.
 - Where the applicant holds a higher research degree that is not a PhD, they must provide certification from their nominated administering institute that their qualification meets the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition.
 - Applicants who have submitted but not been awarded their degree are eligible to apply. If successful, they must be awarded their qualification prior to taking up the Fellowship.
2. Applicants will only be considered if the research is being undertaken at TPCF Campus, or in significant association with TPCF. Proposals addressing one of the four Foundation priority areas of

heart, lung, mental health and ageing will be highly regarded. However, projects that do not directly align with these priorities are still eligible to apply.

3. If the research is to be undertaken on-campus at TPCF and/or another Metro North facility, the applicant must either be employed by Metro North Health as a recognised health professional, or obtain approval permission as an External Researcher prior to starting their project ([External Researchers 006903 | Safety and Quality | Metro North HHS \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#)).

4. TPCF Foundation reserves the right to make the final decision on whether an applicant is eligible to apply under the Early Career or Open Fellowship streams.

- Early Career applicants must be within 5 years from the date their PhD (or equivalent) was awarded (accounting for career disruptions), as at 1 July 2025
- Open fellowship applicants are intended to support mid-career researchers (generally 5 to 15 years post-PhD, however individual circumstances will be considered) who have a well-established academic record and can demonstrate a track record of emerging leadership and independence.

5. The applicant must not have any outstanding TPCF Foundation progress reports.

Career Disruption

1. Unless requested by TPCF Foundation, evidence of career disruption does not need to be submitted with the Fellowship application.

2. Each period of career disruption must:

- Be significant (28 calendar days or more) and not overlapping
- Have occurred after the award of the applicants' PhD (or equivalent)
- Be certified by the applicants' nominated administering institute via a letter of support confirming that disruptions claimed are true and correct, and supported by adequate evidence.

3. Allowable career disruptions include:

- A period commensurate with the interruption:
 - Carer responsibilities
 - Disability
 - Disaster management and recovery
 - Medical conditions
 - Non-research employment, not concurrent with research employment
 - Unemployment
- Primary carer of a dependent child, up to 2 years per child (inclusive of parental leave)

Application submission

1. Applications will only be accepted online through the Smarty Grants portal <https://tpcfoundation.smartygrants.com.au/> and must be submitted by 1pm on the due date. Late applications will not be accepted.

2. Signatures must be obtained from the applicant and head of research group/mentor.

3. The administering institution must be notified prior to lodging the application, and any relevant approvals / letters of support obtained.

Assessment

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and alignment to TPCF. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be assessed further. Those meeting the requirements will be assessed by an independent research panel convened by TPCF Foundation.

Applicants will be assessed based on research performance relative to opportunity. This ensures that the assessment process accurately evaluates the applicants' track record relative to stage of career and opportunities available. For example, circumstances taken into consideration can include: time spent as an active researcher; career disruption; clinical workload; building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over extended periods that impact on research productivity. This is not an exhaustive list. It is the responsibility of the applicant to adequately describe and justify their circumstances.

The assessment will be based on two stages.

Stage 1: Written application. Applicants must submit an application form and project plan (maximum of 4 pages excluding references and figures) via the SmartyGrants portal. The plan must outline the background/rationale, aims, hypothesis, methods, research plan, significance, and expected outcomes. A broad timeline should also be included. Applications will be assessed on:

1. Stream 1: Early Career Fellowship
 - The research area, innovation and significance of the project, and alignment to TPCF (40%)
 - Research output, relevant to opportunity, and future research and leadership potential of the applicant (40%)
 - The research environment, including supervision and mentoring support offered by the broader research team (20%)
2. Stream 2: Open Fellowship
 - The research area, innovation and significance of the project, and alignment to TPCF (40%)
 - Research output, relevant to opportunity, evidence of current leadership, and future leadership potential of the applicant (40%)
 - The research environment, including mentoring and leadership development support (20%)

Stage 2: Interview. The highest ranked applicants will be invited for an interview where the applicant will verbally present their research plan, followed by discussion and questions from the panel. The panel will rank the applicants based on both their written application and interview.

Administering Institution

The Fellowship must be managed by an administering institution, such as a University or Queensland Health Hospital. The administering institution (or its affiliate) must provide the facilities and services necessary for the Fellow to conduct their research during the term of the award.

Obligations of awardees

Fellows are expected to disseminate their results through the normal scientific channels. The support of TPCF Foundation must be acknowledged in any publication, media or presentation arising from the research.

The ability of TPCF Foundation to support research is dependent on our ability to raise funds through donations. Therefore, the ability to engage with potential donors is critical to our success, and it is a condition of accepting the award that successful Fellows will include TPCF Foundation in any publicity surrounding the research. In addition, TPCF Foundation Research Fellows will be expected to provide regular research updates and may be called upon to participate in promotional activities.

Reporting requirements

Fellows will be required to submit six-monthly progress reports, due in April and October each year. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to submit these in a timely manner. Failure to submit a progress report may affect future funding of the Fellowship and further grant opportunities with TPCF Foundation.

Key Dates

Research Fellowships open	11 July 2025
Research Fellowships close	22 August 2025
Applicants notified; successful applicants invited to interview	late September 2025
Interview	early/mid October 2025
Applicants notified of the outcome	November 2025