



The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation New Investigator Grant Guidelines 2026

This document provides information about the application process, eligibility, and conditions to apply for a New Investigator Grant. Further information can be obtained from Dr Rebekah Engel, Research Manager (research@tpchfoundation.org.au).

General information

1. TPCH Foundation New Investigator Grants provide research training and funding to new researchers, who wish to undertake a small project to learn research skills and address a health need. These grants are generously supported by funding from TPCH SERTA Committee, and our community donors.
2. New Investigator Grants are awarded for a research project that can be completed within 1-2 years. Extension requests must be approved by TPCH Foundation.
3. Successful applicants must remain within or associated with their nominated research group for the duration of the grant. Any change in circumstances must be discussed with TPCH Foundation. The Foundation reserves the right to review the applicant's grant in view of these changes and terminate the funding if deemed appropriate.

Eligibility

1. To be eligible for a New Investigator Grant, the applicant must:
 - not have been awarded a peer-reviewed research project grant as a lead investigator within the past five (5) years. *For the purposes of eligibility, scholarships and equipment grants are not considered research grants by the Foundation.*
 - have a publication track record commensurate with early-career status, defined as a maximum of three (3) first-author publications and up to five (5) co-authored publications within the past five (5) years.
 - have limited prior conference presentation experience.In general, applicants that are prior to the conclusion of their PhD will qualify as a New Investigator but are then ineligible once their PhD has been awarded. TPCH Foundation reserves the right to make the final judgement as to whether the applicant is considered eligible.
2. TPCH Foundation New Investigator Grants are awarded to the applicant and are not transferrable. The maximum amount of funding that can be requested is \$12,000. The grant may be used for any related research expense, such as salary costs (including on-costs), consumables or other reasonable research requirements. It cannot be used to fund basic computer equipment, such as personal laptops, or institutional overheads.
3. Conference costs up to \$2000 (restrictions apply, please contact the Research Manager for more information on the Foundation's travel policy) and publication costs up to \$2,000 are allowed but must be fully justified within the application. Open access publication cost justification must include why the applicant is not able to publish in a relevant journal with which their affiliated University has a Read and Publish agreement.
4. Applicants must nominate a suitable Mentor for their project (requirements listed below).

5. Applications will only be considered if the work is being undertaken at TPCH Campus, or in significant association with TPCH. However, it is not necessary for either the New Investigator or the Mentor to be employed by Queensland Health.
6. If the research is to be undertaken on-campus at TPCH 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 \(health.qld.gov.au\)](https://health.qld.gov.au/researchers/006903)).
7. Proposals that address one of the Foundation's priority areas - heart, lung, mental health, and ageing - will be highly regarded. At the same time, we strongly encourage high-quality applications in other areas of health that support the Foundation's mission to "help people live healthier for longer".
8. Any relevant ethics and site-specific approvals must be obtained prior to the commencement of the research project. Approval is not required prior to submitting your application, however it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure approvals are obtained in a timely manner.

Guidelines for application submission

1. Applications will only be accepted online through <https://tpchfoundation.smartygrants.com.au/> and must be submitted by 1pm on the due date. *Late applications will not be accepted.*
2. Applicants must nominate an administering institution, who will manage the funding. The applicant must have an appointment or affiliation with the administering institute. The nominated administering institution must be notified prior to lodging the application and any departmental or institutional approvals must be obtained prior to lodging the application.
3. The project should be described in the Research Plan, clearly outlining the aims and hypothesis, background/literature review, study design and methodology, expected outcomes, and feasibility. Applicants are encouraged to provide enough detail to cover all these areas and give a clear picture of the proposed research.
4. The budget must clearly outline the intended use of the funds. When composing the budget, the following should be noted:
 - If wages are being requested for a student, it must be justified as to why financial support is required and any other financial support must be disclosed e.g. PhD Scholarship.
 - If the budget includes costing for new staff or students, the applicant must speak to TPCH Research Business Manager about space requirements prior to application (TPCHResearchBusiness@health.qld.gov.au)
 - The budget must be appropriate and well justified. Applications where the budget and justifications are not deemed acceptable will not be assessed further.

Expectations of the Mentor

Nomination of a mentor is a requirement for all New Investigator applicants. To be eligible, the mentor:

- must have research qualifications i.e. PhD or equivalent
- must have a proven research track record, and minimum of two years post-doctoral research experience
- must not have any outstanding TPCH Foundation progress reports
- must be named as mentor on no more than three (3) applications per grant round

TPCH Foundation values strong mentoring to help ensure projects are conducted to a high standard, on time, and that applicants gain excellent research training. Mentors play an important role both in preparing the application and, if successful, throughout the grant. As part of the application, a mentor statement should describe the importance of the project, why the nominated mentor is well-suited to support the research, why the mentor has chosen to support the applicant and how the mentor will provide high-quality research training. Clear, thoughtful mentor statements help demonstrate that the project is well-supported and that the applicant will receive meaningful guidance. Applicants and mentors are encouraged to work together to ensure the application is complete, clear, and well-presented.

Application assessment

Applications will be assessed by an independent research panel convened by TPCH Foundation. TPCH Foundation will review applications for eligibility, alignment to TPCH, and an appropriate and well-justified budget. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be assessed further.

Applications will be assessed on:

- Relevance of the project to TPCH, and the role of the New Investigator (20%)
- The research plan (50%), including:
 - Clearly stated aims and hypotheses
 - Significance
 - Study design
 - Expected outcomes
- Feasibility and project benefits (10%)
- An appropriate and well-justified budget (10%)
- The mentor statement (10%)

Obligations of awardees

It is a condition of accepting the grant that recipients will include TPCH Foundation in any publicity surrounding the research. In addition, TPCH Foundation grant recipients will be expected to provide regular research updates and may be called upon to participate in promotional activities.

New Investigator grant recipients are expected to disseminate their results through the normal scientific channels and the support of TPCH Foundation must be acknowledged in any publications, media, or presentations.

Reporting requirements

Grant recipients will be required to submit six-monthly progress reports, due in April and October each year. It is the responsibility of the grant holder to submit these in a timely manner. Failure to submit a progress report will result in the applicant being ineligible for future funding from TPCH Foundation.

Conditions of application

Applicants authorise TPCHF to make any enquiries it considers necessary in relation to the proposed research project.

Key Dates

Applications open	19 January 2026
Applications close	6 March 2026
Applicants notified of outcome	April 2026