

FY27 Research Fellowship Guidelines

This document provides information about the application process, eligibility and conditions to apply for a TPCF Foundation Research Fellowship. Further information can be obtained by emailing Dr Rebekah Engel, Research and Impact Manager (research@tpcfoundation.org.au) or on our [Researcher Hub](#) website.

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.
2. In FY27, two streams of Fellowship will be awarded - Early Career and Mid-Career. 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: Mid-Career 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 have not yet been awarded their degree, are eligible to apply. If successful, they must be awarded their qualification prior to commencing the Fellowship.
2. Applicants will only be considered if the research is being undertaken at TPCH Campus, or in significant association with TPCH. Applications 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 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 \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#)).
4. TPCH Foundation reserves the right to make the final decision on whether an applicant is eligible to apply under the Early Career or Mid-Career Fellowship streams.
- Early Career fellowship applicants must be within 5 years of the award of their PhD (or equivalent) as of 1 July 2026, with allowances made for documented career disruptions.
 - Mid-Career fellowship applicants are intended to support mid-career researchers (generally 5 to 15 years post-PhD), however individual circumstances will be considered. Applicants are expected to demonstrate an established academic record and emerging leadership and research independence.
5. The applicant must not have any outstanding TPCH Foundation progress reports.

Career Disruption

1. Unless requested by TPCH 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
- Unemployment
- Primary carer of a dependent child, up to 2 years per child (inclusive of parental leave)

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Applications

Non-generative AI tools

Applicants may use non-generative AI tools, such as grammar checkers, spell checkers, and style editors, to assist in preparing their application.

Generative AI tools

Generative AI tools, including large language models (e.g. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot), may only be used for administrative assistance or editorial support (for example, formatting, proofreading, or improving clarity of applicant-generated text).

Generative AI must not be used to generate substantive application content, including research aims, hypotheses, methodology, or other scientific material.

Applicant declaration

By submitting an application, applicants declare that any use of generative AI complied with these guidelines and that all information provided is accurate and complete. Applicants remain fully responsible for the content of their application.

Application submission

1. Applications will only be accepted online through tpchfoundation.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.

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.

Assessment

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and alignment with the grant objectives. TPCH Foundation reserves the right not to progress applications to assessment where these requirements are not met. Those meeting the requirements will be assessed by an independent research panel convened by TPCH Foundation.

Assessment will be conducted in two stages.

Stage 1: Written application. Applicants must submit an application form and project plan (maximum of four 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. Applicants must also submit a project timeline which is uploaded separately to the Project Plan, and does not count towards the four-page limit.

Applications will be assessed on:

1. The research area, innovation and significance of the project, and alignment to TPCH (40%)
2. Research output, relevant to opportunity*, and future research and leadership potential of the applicant (40%)
3. The research environment, including supervision and mentoring support offered by the broader research team (20%)

* Applicants will be assessed relative to opportunity, ensuring research performance is considered in the context of career stage and individual circumstances. Relevant factors may include career disruptions, clinical workload, time spent as an active researcher, or extended community engagement activities that impact research productivity. This list is not exhaustive. Applicants are responsible for describing and justifying any circumstances they wish to be considered.

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.

Obligations of awardees

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

The ability of TPCH 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 TPCH Foundation in any publicity surrounding the research. In addition, TPCH 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	22 June 2026
Research Fellowships close	3 August 2026
Applicants notified; successful applicants invited to interview	early Sept 2026
Interview	mid September 2026
Applicants notified of the outcome	October 2026