

ARC Medical Research Policy (v 2018.1)

The ARC Medical Research Policy Version 2018.1 is effective from 11 September 2018.

1. Purpose and Scope

For the purposes of this policy, the definition of medical and health research includes laboratory-based studies, clinical studies and group/community-based studies that aim to understand the causes, treatment and/or prevention of human diseases and/or the maintenance of human health. The ARC does not normally fund research with these aims.

Applications will be considered ineligible for funding under the ARC's National Competitive Grants Program if they include pre-clinical or clinical medical or health research, including investigations in which humans, animals, or their tissues are used to assess new treatments (including chemical, pharmaceutical, electronic, mechanical, bioengineering treatments), interventions or tests as a means to prevent, detect, treat, understand, diagnose or manage a human disease or medical condition. The ARC may, however, fund related research to address specific Australian Government medical and health research priorities¹, either solely or in concert with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

This policy details research which is eligible for ARC support. The intended aim is to reduce the likelihood of applicants preparing and submitting applications to the ARC which are ineligible for funding. Applications must include justification detailing why the application is considered to be compliant with this policy. The ARC may rely solely on the statement in the application to determine whether an application is eligible.

Those seeking funding for medical or health research are advised to explore options available through the NHMRC and other funding bodies, which consider applications in any area relevant to human health, or other medical and health research funding organisations.

2. Eligible Research

Research eligible for ARC support:

- a) research where the aim is the fundamental understanding of biological processes not directly related to human medical and/or health interventions and outcomes (e.g. human biology not related to health); or
- b) research where the aim is the development of basic knowledge and/or technology platforms including management systems, that may have future medical and/or health applications which are clearly specified as being outside the scope of the application; or
- c) research (including observational research) where the aim is to understand the normal human life cycle (e.g. infancy, childhood, adolescence and ageing) and/or traits and behaviour using human participants or populations, except if it involves a health intervention or diseases not specific to those normal cycles; or
- d) the use or development of equipment, facilities, tools, games, devices, smart phone applications and other software or items to support eligible research as listed above.

3. Ineligible Research

Research ineligible for ARC support:

- a) research with direct medical and/or human health aims or purpose, including research on the understanding, aetiology, diagnosis, monitoring, management or treatment of physical or mental disease or other medical and/or human health conditions; or
- b) research for the development or testing of diagnostic procedures or therapeutic goods (including devices), for the purpose of better understanding human medical and/or health conditions and/or developing treatments for medical and/or human health conditions that involves the use of:
 - i) animals, or
 - ii) human tissue, or
 - iii) the use or development of *in vivo* models of medical and/or health conditions, either animal or cellular; or
- c) interventional research in humans, particularly clinical or pre-clinical trials of diagnostic procedures or therapeutic goods (including devices and apps), or research aiming to modify the medical and/or human health condition or behaviour of the human participants; or
- d) the use or development of equipment, facilities, tools, games, devices, smart phone applications and other software or items to better understand, diagnose, monitor, manage or treat medical and/or human health conditions.

4. Process

The ARC may, in its absolute discretion, seek further advice from its Medical Research Advisory Group (an expert committee convened by the ARC), the NHMRC, the Administering Organisation or any other relevant party when determining the eligibility of an application.

If the ARC determines that an application is at risk of not being considered by either agency (ARC or NHMRC), the ARC reserves the right to deem such an application eligible for assessment.

Recognising that an integrated research project or program may sometimes include a small element of research not supported under this policy, the ARC may, but is not obliged to, deem such an application eligible for assessment provided the application predominantly comprises eligible research as set out in this policy.

Applications are still subject to all other eligibility requirements set out in the relevant grant guidelines.

Applications deemed ineligible cannot be recommended or approved for funding under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

5. Contact details

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¹ Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) applications that address a medical research-related priority identified under the ITRP may be submitted, provided the application clearly addresses the objectives of the ITRP. Consistent with this Policy, the main aim of the application must not be to understand the causes, treatment and/or prevention of human diseases and/or the maintenance of human health.