

Innovator Grants - Application Guidelines 2019

Please note – Updated 31st July 2019

Closing date: Friday 30 August 2019, 6:00 pm AEST

Late or incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the application form.

1. Introduction

The MND Research Institute of Australia (MNDRIA) funds Innovator Grants (formerly known as grants-in-aid) to seed innovative projects. 2020 will be an exciting year for MNDRIA, providing support to drive research in the quest for the best possible outcomes for people with MND. MNDRIA will provide support for innovator grants in three key strategic priority areas: (i) advance MND research to understand its causes; (ii) foster the drug development process and clinical trials; (iii) enhance clinical research and the evidence-base for clinical practice.

Knowledge creation through research underpins improvements in intervention and health service delivery;

Advance MND research to understand its causes: Research that improves knowledge of the underlying disease mechanisms causing MND and the development of representative laboratory models.

Foster treatment development and clinical trials: Research that aims to lead to new treatments. Research that is linked to or involves conducting clinical trials.

Enhance clinical research and the evidence-base for clinical practice:

Clinical and healthcare research to promote innovation and best practice to improve quality of life for people living with MND and their families and carers.

Each of these research priorities are vital components of the research pipeline.

2. Objectives of the Innovator Grants

- 2.1. MNDRIA's Innovator Grants support research that aims to answer new research questions or new aspects of research. They are not intended to act as a funding stream to continue the same projects previously supported by MNDRIA.
- 2.2. The research focus should be directed towards [classical forms of MND](#). Classical MND includes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and bulbar palsies (progressive bulbar palsy and pseudobulbar palsy), progressive muscular atrophy (PMA) and primary lateral sclerosis (PLS). Research investigating other forms of MND should demonstrate a potential benefit to the classical forms of MND.
- 2.3. Innovator Grants provide seed funding for research that is innovative and has a clear relationship to (i) advance MND research to understand its causes; (ii) foster treatment development and clinical trials or (iii) enhance clinical research and the evidence-base for clinical practice.
- 2.4. MNDRIA Innovator Grants are offered to a maximum value of \$100,000 for a twelve-month project.

3. Application

3.1. Key eligibility criteria

- 3.1.1. The applicant should have a track record in health and medical research.
- 3.1.2. Applicants holding an MNDRIA Postdoctoral Fellowship are not eligible to

apply for an Innovator Grant in the first year of their fellowship.

- 3.1.3. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or have permanent resident status.

3.2. **Application process**

- 3.2.1. **Applications will only be accepted through [NHMRC administering institutions](#). Applications should be submitted by the institution research office.** Applications submitted directly by the applicant will not be accepted.
- 3.2.2. Applicants can be a Principal Investigator on only one Innovator Grant application and a Co-Investigator on no more than three Innovator Grant applications. The applicant must be the Principal Investigator.
- 3.2.3. Researchers who have applied for a Betty Laidlaw MND Research Prize for 2020 may also apply as Principal Investigator for an Innovator Grant but cannot accept the Innovator Grant if awarded the Betty Laidlaw Prize.
- 3.2.4. Applicants must use the relevant application form on the MNDRIA website.
- 3.2.5. If the **applicant** has received previous funding from MNDRIA **in the past five years**, reports (no more than 2 pages each) on this previously funded work must be sent with the current application.
- 3.2.6. Researchers should not apply if they are unable to provide a financial acquittal for previously funded work before 30 June 2020.
- 3.2.7. All applications will be assessed by the MNDRIA Research Committee against the selection criteria as outlined in these guidelines. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applicants who fail to meet any one of the eligibility criteria will be deemed to be ineligible.
- 3.2.8. The [MNDRIA Research Committee](#) is responsible for assessing applications and making their recommendation for funding approval to the Board of MND Australia.

3.3. **Applications close at 6:00pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019.**

- 3.3.1. Proposals are to be sent to Dr Gethin Thomas, Executive Director Research by email to research@mndaustralia.org.au.
- 3.3.2. All sections of the application, including the cover sheet, must be saved and forwarded as a single PDF document.
- 3.3.3. Font must be Arial and at least 11 pt.

3.4. **Incomplete or misleading information**

- 3.4.1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that applications are complete and accurate. If an application is incomplete or inaccuracies are identified, MNDRIA will exclude it from further consideration.
- 3.4.2. If any application is found to have been intentionally completed (or failed to be completed) in such a way as to mislead MNDRIA, or is otherwise false or misleading in any material respect, the applicant will be disqualified from the grant.

4. **Proposals** should include:

4.1. **Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators.**

- 4.1.1. They should be identified by their role in the research.
- 4.1.2. The Principal Investigator should provide a brief CV (no longer than two A4 pages). Publications included in the CV should be restricted to the past five years. This list should not include publications 'in preparation' or 'submitted'.
- 4.1.3. Do not include CVs for Co-Investigators.
- 4.1.4. If the **applicant** is named as an investigator on other proposals for MNDRIA funding for 2020, list the project title and principal investigator for those other applications.

4.2. **Aims and hypotheses** (maximum 1 page).

- 4.2.1. The aims of the research must be clear to the MNDRIA Research Committee and relevant to the development of an understanding of the causes, fostering the drug development process and clinical trials, or enhancing clinical research and the evidence-base for clinical practice.
- 4.2.2. Hypotheses should be explained in terms of the current theories about the causes, treatments or cures of MND.

4.3. **Significance** (maximum 1 page)

- 4.3.1. What is new and/ or different about the proposed research plan?
- 4.3.2. What is the potential to significantly contribute to the knowledge base around the causes, treatments or cure for MND?

4.4. **Background and Research Plan** (maximum 4 pages)

4.5. **Power Calculation (maximum 8 lines per calculation)**

This section ensures applicants have thought about whether their study is powered sufficiently (the sample size is adequate) to answer the question to be addressed.

4.6. **Reference list** (maximum 2 pages)

4.7. **Justification for the requested funding** (maximum 1 page).

The budget must be directed to the aims of the project.

4.7.1. Budget items up to \$100,000 can include:

- 4.7.1.1. Salaries
- 4.7.1.2. Direct research costs (reagents and consumables)
- 4.7.1.3. Attendance at the International Symposium on ALS/MND in Montreal Canada, 9-11 December 2020 (max. \$4,000).

4.7.2. Budget items cannot include:

- 4.7.2.1. Attendance at meetings (other than 4.5.1.3 above)
- 4.7.2.2. Travel expenses (other than 4.5.1.3 above)
- 4.7.2.3. Equipment (except small items included in 4.5.1.2 above)
- 4.7.2.4. Indirect or overhead costs.

4.7.3. **Other sources of funding** to support the project must be disclosed.

4.8. **Completed cover sheet**

- 4.8.1. Applicants must complete all sections of the cover sheet as part of the application form.

5. **Review process**

- 5.1. Applications will be reviewed by a minimum of three independent reviewers as part of a competitive, peer review process.
- 5.2. Applications will be scored according to (i) track record of the applicant, (ii) strength of the research plan and (iii) its relevance to MND.

- 5.3. Funding decisions will be made by the MNDRIA Research Committee at a Grants Allocation Meeting in October 2019. Successful applicants will be notified after this meeting.
- 5.4. The decision of the Research Committee is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

6. Commencement of the Innovator Grant from 1 January 2020

- 6.1. Successful applicants must commence their Innovator Grant no later than 30 June 2020 or the grant will lapse.
- 6.2. A satisfactory final report and financial acquittal on previously funded grants must be received before commencement of the new Innovator Grant.

6.3. Payment and reporting

- 6.3.1. The grant will be paid in two equal amounts. The grant will commence with the first payment at the beginning of 2020 on signing a contract with MNDRIA. The second payment will be made on receipt of a satisfactory six-month progress report.
- 6.3.2. If the progress report is not concordant with the grant proposal, no further funds will be forthcoming. If the grantee wishes to change the emphasis of the study, that must be with prior approval of the MNDRIA Research Committee.
- 6.3.3. A final report and financial acquittal must be submitted on completion of the project.
- 6.3.4. Lay reports may be included on MNDRIA's website and newsletters to members, patients, carers, the MND Associations and others who provide funds to MNDRIA.

6.4. Alterations to the Innovator Grant

- 6.4.1. Grant-holders must adhere to the approved project.
- 6.4.2. Any proposed alterations should be submitted in advance for approval by the MNDRIA Research Committee.
- 6.4.3. MNDRIA must be notified immediately if circumstances change during the tenure of the Innovator Grant, particularly if this affects the ability to undertake the project. MNDRIA retains the right to review the grant in light of these changes and reserves the right to terminate the grant should this be deemed appropriate.

6.5. Publications, presentations and acknowledgements

- 6.5.1. The successful applicant will be expected to publish their findings in an appropriate scientific journal.
- 6.5.2. Publications and presentations must acknowledge MNDRIA and the name of the grant.

7. Privacy of individuals/ confidentiality

- 7.1. All personal information provided in the application and assessment details will be kept by MNDRIA and only be used for the purposes of administering this application and, if successful, the Innovator Grant.
- 7.2. The applicant's personal information will be disclosed to reviewers as noted above.
- 7.3. Some details of successful applications will be published on the MNDRIA website, including name, location, project title and a brief description of the project.
- 7.4. Information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential except as stated in 7.1.