PhD SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM
GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS
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NSW Health invites eligible individuals and their Host University to apply for support under the NSW Health PhD Scholarships Program. Funding is being offered as part of the NSW Government’s 2015 election commitment to boost support for researchers in NSW. Funding for this opportunity will be distributed from 2017-2019. The program will provide $20,000 per annum for three years as a stipend for a PhD Candidate with Partner Organisations and/or Host Universities providing matching funding to provide a total of $40,000 per annum. A further $10,000 accelerator grant will be available, after 12 months and upon application, to contribute to the PhD’s project costs.

Researchers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions are encouraged to apply. Part time applications will be considered. Two scholarships are designated for Candidates of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Submission of applications

Applications must be submitted by the Host University on behalf of the Candidate using the PhD Scholarships Application Form and include any supporting evidence. The form is available at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr.

Applications should be submitted by email to phd@doh.health.nsw.gov.au by COB Tuesday 5pm, 21 February 2017

For queries regarding PhD Scholarships, please email phd@doh.health.nsw.gov.au. Answers of common interest will be made available on the PhD Scholarships webpage. Please check the website regularly.

Indicative program timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHD SCHOLARSHIPS (2017)</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for Applications</td>
<td>November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>Tuesday 5pm, 21 February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of successful Candidates</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding commences for new and existing students</td>
<td>Semester 2 commencement date (or semester that commences after 30 June 2017, if your university has four [4] semesters)</td>
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**SECTION B**

**PhD Scholarships Program**

1. **Introduction**

This is the first round of funding support for the PhD Scholarships Program - a new funding program of NSW Health.

Grants are available to Host Universities to support staff who are PhD Candidates and who work within, or closely with, NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs), Ambulance Service of NSW and Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) including medical staff, nursing staff, allied health professionals and population health practitioners. Candidates who are not NSW Health staff are also eligible to apply if they intend to work with one of the entities above as part of their PhD.

**NB:** Candidates will be required to be located in NSW for the duration of the scholarship.

Funding will be provided to Host Universities to support PhD Candidates gain skills and undertake projects that will build capacity in the NSW Health system in areas of identified need such as epidemiology, bioinformatics, health economics, biostatistics, implementation science, health systems research, health workforce and ‘omics and that translate that research into better patient outcomes, that improve the delivery of health services and/or enhance population health and wellbeing.

**Host Universities are invited to submit a maximum of ten (10) applications only.**

All applications must be submitted by a designated senior representative (Research Director, Dean of Research etc.) from each Host University and be supported by a partner who is a NSW organisation that conducts health and medical research (Partner Organisations). The PhD Candidate must be overseen by an Academic Supervisor at the Host University and the research project must be overseen by a health practitioner/policy supervisor who also works within, or closely with, the NSW health system (NB: the two supervisors can be the same person if they meet the requirements).

2. **Purpose**

The purpose of the PhD Scholarships Program is to develop the capability and skill of PhD Candidates while harnessing the research capacity within the NSW Health system to improve the health system, patient outcomes and/or population health and wellbeing in NSW. The program will support research that is a priority for the State as articulated in strategic research plans and promotes the translation of that research into policy and practice. NSW Health especially encourages applications that support clinicians and health professionals to undertake research. The scheme is designed to attract high quality PhD students, grow successful research training programs and accelerate the development of research capabilities and evidence translation.

3. **Objectives**

- Attract high quality PhD students that strengthen successful research training programs
- Develop the capability and skill of the PhD Candidate
- Encourage applications from clinicians and health professionals
- Build capacity in the Health System in areas of identified need: epidemiology, bioinformatics, health economics, biostatistics, implementation science, health workforce, health systems research and ‘omics
- Improve efficiencies in the delivery of population health, health services and clinical care in NSW
- Provide support to projects that transfer and scale best practice processes
- Enhance health and medical research capability within the NSW health system.
4. PhD Skills in Priority Areas

The priority areas in the NSW Health system for skills development are:

- epidemiology, bioinformatics, health economics, biostatistics, implementation science, health workforce, health systems research and 'omics;
- that support the translation of research into better patient outcomes, improve the delivery of health services and/or enhance population health and wellbeing.

Other skill areas may be nominated, but a case will need to be made as to why they are a priority for the NSW Health system.

One key focus area must be nominated in the application.

5. Details of funding

The PhD Scholarships will provide a stipend of $40,000 per annum for three (3) years to successful Candidates enrolled in a PhD at a Host University ($20,000 from NSW Health and $20,000 from the Partner Organisations and/or Host University).

Part time students

PhD Scholarships are open to full time and part time Candidates. Funding will be pro-rata for part time Candidates based on the student load approved by the Host University that the Candidate is enrolled in (e.g. a 50 per cent student load will be awarded $20,000 per annum over six (6) years). A 50 per cent contribution from the Partner Organisations and/or Host University is still required. Confirmation that the Host University has accepted the part time enrolment and the terms of that enrolment will be required.

Existing PhD students

Candidates who have already completed part of their PhD, up to 2 years full time (or part-time equivalent), may apply for a scholarship for the remaining duration of their PhD. The scholarship will be awarded for the remaining duration of a 3 year full-time (or part-time equivalent) scholarship, i.e. if you are 2 years completed, your scholarship will be for 1 year (or part-time equivalent); if you are 1 year completed, your scholarship will be for 2 years (or part-time equivalent).

Completion is measured to the Semester 2 commencement date, i.e. existing PhD students who are 2 years completed at the end of this year (and as such will be 2 years completed at the time of application) would be ineligible to apply as their scholarship would only support their candidature in Semester 2 (equivalent to a 0.5 year scholarship).

Holders of other scholarships

PhD Scholarships will not be available to holders of other scholarships, including all NHMRC scholarships, during the term of the PhD Scholarship.

Accelerator Grants

An additional one-off ‘Accelerator Grant’ of up to $10,000 will be provided to each successful PhD Scholarship Candidate after a minimum of one year full time completion or part-time equivalent of their PhD to assist in the completion of the PhD project and will require submission of a short project proposal as part of the first set of milestone reporting. NB: the Accelerator Grant is only available to Candidates who commence their NSW Health scholarship within 12 months of their initial PhD commencement date.

Funding under the accelerator grant may be used for costs associated with the research project and translation activities, but cannot be directed towards research administration costs, capital works, general maintenance costs, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities. Direct research costs including, but not limited to, transcription services, research assistance, field trips and facility access costs are eligible.

Conditions applying to the scholarship

The standard scholarship conditions and administrative requirements of the Host University will apply to these scholarships (e.g. recreation leave, sick leave, leave of absence).
6. Skills Development Plan (SDP)

A key part of the program will be the successful implementation of a Skills Development Plan (SDP) for the PhD Candidate. The clearly articulated plan will set out the skills to be obtained and how the Candidate will acquire them. This includes how the research project supports skills acquisition and how each of the research partners contributes to both the project and the SDP. Clear milestones for the acquisition of skills will also be required.

For example; if the PhD intends to focus on the health economics evaluation of a new clinical intervention, the SDP should list each of the skills required to undertake the evaluation (e.g. study design, advanced techniques for data capture and analysis, stakeholder management etc.). The SDP should then state whether the Candidate has these skills and experience, what skills and experience they will be acquiring through the program, the support and mentoring available to acquire these and relevant milestones for when they will be acquired.

7. Research and implementation partners

Candidates will need to identify and engage relevant partners who are essential for the effective translation into policy and/or practice of the outcomes of the PhD project. Candidates are encouraged to partner with a NSW Health entity, research institute, or non-profit agency that is involved in health and medical research and/or health policy to assist. An explanation will be required if this is not considered appropriate for the research project.

Partners may include consumers, internal cross-disciplinary partners, other universities, medical research institutes, NSW Health Pillars, the NSW Ministry of Health, other LHDs/SHNs/Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Health Pathology, Research Hubs, relevant clinical networks, non-government organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and primary healthcare networks.

Note that the application must include a Partner Organisation that

a) conducts health and medical research, and is one of the following organisations: a department or research centre within a University; a NSW Health entity; an independent Medical Research Institute; or a not-for-profit organisation and

b) provides a Health Practitioner/Policy supervisor that will mentor the Candidate.

8. Funding conditions and exclusions

In general; PhD Scholarships funding must not be expended on capital works, general maintenance costs, organisational infrastructure or overheads, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities.

Funding is conditional on the Candidate’s Host University signing the standard Grant Agreement, available on the PhD Scholarship webpage: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/.

The Grant Agreement emphasises the Host University’s role in supporting the Candidate’s career development. Host Universities are advised to read the Grant Agreement before the application is submitted.

Once completed, the Grant Agreement will include a revised copy of the application submitted incorporating any amendments required by NSW Ministry of Health, to act as a record of the planned activities.

Candidates are advised to obtain independent tax advice regarding the PhD Scholarships.
SECTION C

Eligibility Criteria

Applications must meet all twelve eligibility criteria, which relate to the Host University as well as the prospective Candidate. To certify that the application meets the eligibility criteria, the Candidate and the Host University will need to provide signed copies of the declarations included in Section F of the application form.

Prospective Candidate

1. Host University support
The Candidate must be a current student of, or have received a formal offer of enrolment into a PhD course in, an eligible Host University. Proof of enrolment or an offer of enrolment into a PhD course will be required.

2. Nomination by the Host University
The Candidate must be one of the ten (10) nominated by the Host University for support under the program. If more than ten (10) applications are provided by a Host University the first ten (10) applications received by the Office for Health and Medical Research will be deemed eligible and the remaining application/s ruled ineligible. The order of receipt will be determined at the discretion of the Office for Health and Medical Research.

3. Nominate a priority area for skills development
The Candidate must nominate one of the PhD Scholarships priority areas or justify another high demand skill, to develop through their PhD.

4. Arrangements for supervision agreed
The Candidate must have negotiated supervision by an employee (or affiliate) of their proposed NSW Host University for the term of the scholarship in addition to a Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor (see below).

5. Australian citizen or permanent residency status
The Candidate must be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia. Candidates who are neither Australian citizens nor permanent residents will not be deemed eligible.

6. Guarantee of financial support
The Candidate must have a guarantee of financial support at $20,000 per annum for the stipend of the Candidate, which will be matched by NSW Health, from either a Partner Organisation and/or the Host University.

Host University

1. Located in NSW
The Candidate’s Host University must be located in NSW.

2. Legally compliant and committed to providing appropriate support
The Candidate’s Host University must meet all standard employer responsibilities required by law, accommodate and support the Candidate for the term of their PhD.

3. Gender equity policies and practice
The Candidate’s Host University must demonstrate gender equity policies and practice.

4. Commitment to include Candidate in relevant project
The Candidate’s Host University must commit to including the Candidate in relevant, priority driven, projects. These projects should ensure continuous engagement with delivery arms of the health system, to ensure research outcomes can be translated and implemented.
Partner Organisation

1. Partner Organisation conducts health and medical research
The Candidate’s Partner Organisation must conduct health and medical research, and be one of the following organisations: a department or research centre within a University; a NSW Health entity; an independent Medical Research Institute; or a not-for-profit organisation.

2. Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor
The Candidate must identify a mentor employed at, or affiliated with, the Partner Organisation to support the project. This Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor must be involved in the PhD’s project and provide guidance on the translation of the research into policy and/or practice.

**Where the Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor is also an employee of the Host University, they can also be the Academic Supervisor (as outlined at four (4) above).
SECTION D

Selection Criteria

All applications for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria.

NB: The Host University will undertake its own assessments and determine at its own discretion who they will nominate as Candidates for consideration under the Program (a maximum of ten (10) Candidates may be nominated by each Host University).

1. Skills Development Plan (SDP) (40%)

a) Development of a well-articulated SDP

i) The extent to which the SDP sets out existing skills and those to be acquired during the PhD program; and the overall effectiveness of the Plan in outlining specific research skills that would be acquired by completing their PhD.

ii) The skills the Candidate already has are well described in the SDP, and complement the project.

iii) The extent to which the SDP demonstrates a strategy to address skills and experience development in collaboration with the Academic Supervisor, Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor and other career development partners.

b) Focused on acquisition of skills in priority areas

i) The skills to be acquired are a priority for NSW; the Candidate must nominate a single key focus area for the PhD Scholarship from the priority skill areas or justify another high demand skill, to develop through their scholarship.

ii) Priority skills areas include areas that build capacity in the NSW Health system in epidemiology, bioinformatics, health economics, biostatistics, implementation science, health workforce and ‘omics.

The skills must support research that can be translated into better patient outcomes, improves the delivery of health services and/or enhances population health and wellbeing.

2. Research Proposal (30%)

a) Focus on novel and relevant research

i) The extent to which the research project will generate novel and/or relevant evidence for policy and/or practice, and will likely impact patient wellbeing, population health, health service delivery or policy.

ii) Likelihood of being able to complete the project in the three year timeframe of a PhD (or other agreed timeframe for part time Candidates).

b) Supports knowledge translation into the health system

The extent to which the project supports research translation and knowledge dissemination, including:

- Identification of essential partners who will contribute to the research project and translation.
- Evidence of partnerships and consultation in the development of the proposal, including clear links to the stakeholders that will likely implement the outcomes from the research.
- Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders (e.g. with other researchers, clinicians, consumers, policy makers and the community) to disseminate and determine relevance of new knowledge as it emerges.
- Proposed activities for research translation and knowledge exchange.
- Consideration of sustainability and scalability of outcomes, including consideration of value for money.
3. **Host University, Partner Organisation and Supervision (30%)**

a) **Provision of an appropriate Academic Supervisor** with suitable track record relevant to the PhD research area.

b) **Extent to which the Host University supports the skill development of the Candidate** including both degree completion and any skills development separate from their thesis research.

c) **A relevant Partner Organisation supports the project and the PhD Candidate**
   
i) Suitability of the Partner Organisation in promoting the translation of the Candidate’s research.
   
ii) Support that they are willing to provide to the PhD Candidate and the project.

d) **Engagement with a Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor**
   
i) Extent to which the Health Practitioner/Policy Supervisor can support the career development goals of the Candidate, and address the identified skill priority area of the Candidate.
   
ii) Track record of the Supervisor with respect to understanding research and translation activities.
SECTION E

Selection Process

STEP 1: Initial eligibility appraisal
Following the closing date for applications, the NSW Ministry of Health will make an appraisal as to whether or not each application has satisfied all of the eligibility criteria.

STEP 2: Independent review by a panel of experts against the selection criteria
An Independent Selection Panel of expert reviewers will assess each application against the selection criteria and identify applications where it is felt clarification is required.

The Panel will be chaired by Professor Garry Jennings and include panel members with expertise in the key skill priority areas along with clinical, health services and population health research and knowledge translation. The Panel may consist of a mixture of NSW and inter-state University representatives, Health Professionals, Academics and Researchers adequately qualified and/or skilled in assessing PhD Scholarship applications.

Based on the reviewers' assessment each application will be given a total score and recommendations for funding sent to NSW Ministry of Health for approval.

STEP 3: Grant Agreements initiated
The NSW Ministry of Health will then make contact with successful Candidate's Host University to establish Grant Agreements.
SECTION F

Reporting Requirements

The Host University will enter into a Grant Agreement with NSW Health that sets out obligations. A schedule for reporting will be outlined in the Grant Agreement and will include a requirement to provide:

- Annual progress reports.
- Annual financial reports.
- A final report following the conclusion of the term of the Scholarship.

SECTION G

Evaluation

The NSW Health PhD Scholarships scheme (2017-2019) will be evaluated against its intended purpose and objectives. This evaluation will be done in collaboration with the Host University’s and the Candidates. This may include face-to-face meetings. Feedback received will be used to inform the future directions of PhD Scholarships.