

St GEORGE & SUTHERLAND MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

ESTABLISHMENT GRANTS

DESCRIPTION AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

for funding commencing in 2011

Key dates:

Applications open 3rd May 2010

Applications close 5pm, Thursday 5th August, 2010

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered

1. Description and Objectives of Foundation Establishment Grants

The aim of the Foundation Establishment Grant scheme is to support outstanding clinicians and biomedical scientists, some in the early stage their career, to either re-establish, relocate a research program or progress preliminary research to a stage that renders the work competitive in attracting substantive external grant funding. The grant, up to a maximum total amount of \$50,000, can be used for any combination of personnel, equipment (excluding infrastructure), consumables or other expenses, but not for travel. Establishment grants may be awarded in any of the following three categories:

- a) ***New Appointee Grants***: Provide limited funding for 12 months, for a new or established investigator who is or who has recently taken up a new appointment at St George and/or Sutherland Hospital and who is intending to establish a new research program, or relocate an established program from another institution. The applicant must be the principal investigator on the research project outlined. It is expected that the applicant in this category already has an established or promising track record in research, and should have completed (or provide proof of imminent completion of) a higher degree (eg MD, PhD or Masters by research).
- b) ***New Investigator Grants***: Provide limited funding for 12 months to assist a promising young investigator, who has yet to secure substantive competitive external grant funding, to advance a body of research to a stage that would render the researcher competitive in applying for major external grant funding the following year. The applicant must be the principal investigator on the research project outlined. It is expected that the applicant will have had several years of research experience; preferably holds a higher degree (eg MD, PhD, Masters by research) and who, at the time of application, has not yet secured external grant support through a competitive process.
- c) ***Seed Grants***: Provide seed funding for 12 months to assist a new or an established investigator to progress a novel or innovative area of research, currently deemed unlikely to succeed in securing external competitive grant funding, to the proof of principle stage that would render that investigator's grant proposal competitive in obtaining such external grant funding the following year.

2. Eligibility – General criteria

Applicants must meet **all of** the following criteria, **at the time of application**:

- Be Australian citizens or permanent residents or New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category Visa. Applicants who have applied for but not yet been granted permanent residency or a Special Category Visa may apply for the award. Evidence of the appropriate status must be provided before the commencement of the award;
- Currently holds or is due, before 1st July the year following submission of the application, to take up a new appointment at St George and/or Sutherland Hospital; and
- Have made prior arrangements with the Head of Department in which they propose to conduct their research to provide reassurance that fundamental infrastructure is available to conduct the research within that Department; and
- Must be the leading chief investigator on the proposed research project that forms the basis of the application

Reasons for ineligibility to apply include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- applicants already in receipt of comparable grant support from alternative sources to support this specific project.

3. Eligibility – Specific for Subcategories of Establishment Grants

3.1 Eligibility criteria for New Appointee Grants:

In addition to the general requirements detailed above, those eligible to apply:

- Have held a tenured appointment at St George and/or Sutherland Hospital, for no longer than 2 years*; or have been appointed but will take up a tenured appointment before 1st July the year following submission of the application; and
- Hold a higher degree in research (eg PhD, MD, or Masters by research) or provide evidence of imminent submission of their research thesis; and

**Under exceptional circumstances this time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Scientific Advisory Committee (eg overseas study leave, maternity leave)*

3.2 Eligibility criteria for New Investigator Grants:

In addition to the general requirements detailed above, those eligible to apply:

- Are not named as a Chief Investigator on a previously supported external competitive grant; and
- Have not yet received an external grant of greater than \$55,000 from a competitive external source as Chief Investigator; and
- Have had several years of research experience. It is desirable but not essential that the applicant holds a higher degree (eg MD, PhD, Masters by research).

3.1 Eligibility criteria for Seed Grants:

In addition to the general requirements detailed above, those eligible to apply:

- Have had several years of research experience. It is desirable but not essential that the applicant holds a higher degree (eg MD, PhD, Masters by research); and
- Are able to show that the project for which they seek support has a reasonable chance of success in securing research funding from an external organization through a competitive process the following year.

4. Terms and Conditions of Award

4.1 Level and Duration of Funding

Establishment Grants are awarded for a maximum period of 12 months. The Board of the St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, on an annual basis, depending upon its discretionary budget, will determine the number of Foundation Grants to be made available and the level of funding for each. The amounts provided under the Establishment Grant scheme will be up to a maximum of \$50,000. From time to time, the Board of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation may adjust the amount awarded to a successful applicant if that applicant has secured significant additional funding from alternative sources, but where such funding is insufficient on its own to provide adequate support for that project.

5. Grant Administration

The Foundation will make 4 quarterly payments to its awardees in January, April, July and October of the year in which the Grant is held. (Where the total awarded is less than \$10,000, (eg grant in aid) this can be made in one lump payment). The funds can, at the discretion of the awardee, be used for any combination of personnel, equipment (excluding infrastructure), consumables, or other expenses, but not for travel. It is intended that the funds will be used within the 12 month stipulated in the award. Except under special circumstances, and only with prior approved by the Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee, there is no provision for carry-over of funds beyond the 12 months. Unused funds as of the termination date of the award must be returned to the Foundation.

6. Reporting Requirements

Final progress report: - This report, written in terms understandable to the general public, must include a summary of achievements and include a list of publications, and must be submitted before the 14th February of the following year. This report will also be used to update the Foundation Board and will be included in the Foundation's annual report as well as other promotional material at the discretion of the Board to assist with fundraising or procurement of industry support for these awards.

Recognition of the Award: Appropriate recognition for the assistance of Foundation funding, and any partnering sponsor(s) where applicable, must be included in any publications resulting from work undertaken during the tenure of an Establishment Grant, by stating that the author (or co-author) holds a St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, Establishment Grant.

7. Process of Application Review

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that all conflicts of interest, where they may exist, are dealt with consistently and transparently. All participants in the peer review process for the Foundation will respect confidentiality in relation to the applications and to the peer review process, and will not disclose any confidential information, including the outcomes of considerations. (Refer Appendix 1: "*Guidelines for treatment of conflict of interest*").

Applications will be subjected to an internal review process by the Foundations Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), which will rank and prioritise proposals. Where possible or necessary (eg where there is insufficient internal expertise to objectively evaluate an application), applications will be sent for external expert review. The SAC will then submit its findings to the Board of the St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. The final approval on awards and funds allocated will be made by the Board. All decisions by the Board in the relation to awardees, and allocated funds, and any related conditions that is sees fit to implement, will be final.

Contact for additional information or queries related to awards:

St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation website: www.stgeorgemrf.com.au

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Chair, SGMRF Scientific Advisory Committee

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APPENDIX 1:

GUIDELINES FOR TREATMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. The SGMRF is committed to fair review of all grant applications ensuring any Conflicts of Interest are dealt with consistently and transparently. The essence of a quality peer review process demands all participants act in good faith, in an open and sensible manner. The ensuing guidelines will assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Foundation's policy. The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) acknowledges that there are many forms of Conflict of Interest. It is an important fundamental of the peer review process that people within the field have access to other grant applications. It is also recognised that most SAC and many of the Foundation Board members are actively engaged in research considered to be of significant importance to St George and/or Sutherland Hospital. As such it is not reasonable that SAC members nor members of their research group be excluded from submitting applications for funding for consideration by the SAC.

2. When formally accepting the role as a reviewer for one or more applications received by the Foundation, each reviewer (eg SAC member; external reviewer) must first determine that no potential conflict of interest might arise. Where such potential exists, the invited reviewer will notify the Chair of the SAC where indicated on the invitation document, stating reasons for that opinion. If there is no conflict of interest, he/she must sign the invitation document to indicate this and that he/she can abide by the Foundation's policies and guidelines.

3. The following are the principal areas where conflicts may arise:

- Direct involvement in the application as Chief Investigator or Associate/Principle Investigator.
- Direct or potential involvement due to a personal financial interest in the outcome of the granting process ^{a,b}.
- Potential involvement as a scientific ^a, or organisational group colleague^b.
- Perceived involvement due to a family/ personal relationship, either currently or during the past five years ^{a,b}.
- If at any time there has been a verbal or written dispute between an applicant and the individual acting for the Foundation.
- Any other perceived conflicts.

4. All members of the SAC will be provided with the information on all applicants, their departmental and other affiliations, the assigned reviewers and each reviewer's signed conflict of interest declaration for each application. The full SAC will review this information; all conflicts of interest will be recorded and clarification sought where necessary before finalising reviewers for each application. No reviews can commence until the SAC has approved the matching of applicants and reviewers.

a. a scientific colleague is defined as another scientist with whom the collaborator has published papers, held grants or acted in a Higher Degree by Research student/Supervisor relationship with any of the applicants during the past five years.

b. a colleague within an identifiable organisational group from which joint benefit may follow award of the grant, ie. Members of the same research group or hospital department.

5. After discussing any conflicts of interest, the SAC may decide that:
- a) the SAC member with conflicts must not be present during any discussion of the application;
 - b) the SAC member has unique knowledge of the research area of the application and may only be present to answer direct questions relating to scientific issues, and is not to be present, or take any further part in the application review process. Note that questions are to be directed after the conflicts of interest have been identified and prior to discussion of the application; or
 - c) no action is deemed necessary.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest

Some examples of conflicts of interest and appropriate SAC decisions:

Example 1: A SAC is required to review an application where Prof Brown is an applicant. Dr Smith, a member of the SAC, is also a member of Prof Brown's research unit.

SAC Action: Dr Smith is not to be present when Prof Brown's application is being reviewed by the SAC.

Example 2: A departmental colleague of Dr Jones (a member of the SAC) has submitted an application for funding for a research area related to hypogeniology. The SAC is required to review this application.

SAC Action: Dr Jones has exceptional knowledge in this particular field and her exclusion from discussions may result in the application not receiving fair representation. The SAC decision should be that Dr Jones be directed to answer only specific scientific questions related to the application, and not be present for or take part in general discussions, nor score or have input on the final ranking decision.

Example 3: Prof Wilson is the Head of the Department of Interesting Disorders at St George Hospital and is also a member of the SAC. Prof Wilson's Department has submitted an application for the peer review process by the SAC.

SAC Action: If the application from Prof Wilson's Department were successful, Prof Wilson could receive financial gain, and therefore should not be present whilst that particular application is being reviewed.