



Australian Type 1 Diabetes  
Clinical Research Network

## Early and Mid Career Basic Researcher Fellowships 2024

### Request for Applications

<b>Applications Open</b>	12 September 2023
<b>Application Deadline* †</b>	31 October 2023
<b>Award Notification ^</b>	January 2024
<b>Earliest Start^</b>	January 2024

\* Research Office of each Administering Institution is required to certify applications submitted to JDRF in RMS360 and may have an internal closing time which precedes this deadline.

†Deadlines are at 11:59 pm AEST/AEDT.

^Subject to change.

[Click Here to Apply](#)

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

The JDRF Australian [Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network \(T1DCRN\)](#) provides a national framework to support the most promising type 1 diabetes (T1D) research and clinical trials in Australia. The T1DCRN was initiated with the goal of positively impacting the lives of people with T1D through the support and translation of research. The T1DCRN has a strong track record of accelerating and expanding Australia's excellence in T1D research translation and driving strong clinical outcomes<sup>1</sup> aligned with [JDRF's research goals](#).

Fostering the development of the best and the brightest researchers who can bridge the gap between the bench and bedside and accelerate world-class T1D research is a core aim of the T1DCRN.

As a dedicated funder committed to advancing research and innovation in T1D, JDRF recognises the importance of nurturing Early and Mid Career Researchers (EMCRs) for the acceleration of scientific progress, and to ensure the reputation and global recognition of Australian research in T1D is sustained.

The T1DCRN also recognises that that Australian basic EMCRs rely heavily on academia as their primary employment option compared to many other OECD nations<sup>2</sup>. As such, the need for more harmonised approaches between funders with universities, hospitals and medical research institutions are necessary to better support talent in their career progression.

The purpose of the Request for Applications (RFA): *“Early and Mid-Career Basic Researcher Fellowship 2024”* is to provide support to emerging scientists engaged in T1D research. This initiative aims to:

- Bolster EMCR research capacity within the key focus areas relevant to T1D and prioritised by JDRF.
- Cultivate their independent research concepts, emphasising robust translational potential.
- Accelerate advancements in the realms of preventing, treating, or curing T1D.

By providing career development opportunities like this JDRF demonstrates its unwavering commitment to elevating the next generation of researchers, driving transformative change, and ultimately improving the lives of those affected by type 1 diabetes. As part of the T1DCRN community, Fellows will gain access to forthcoming career development programs. These programs are poised to continuously nurture and cultivate the upcoming cohort of T1D research leaders.

## 2. Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this Fellowship is to provide emerging basic researchers bolster their research capabilities in T1D, while fostering independence in their investigations. This will be realised by supporting individuals who are already active in T1D research, providing them with training and career development opportunities in high quality and supportive environments.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report: JDRF Australia Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network: a decade of impact.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Hardy, M (2016). Palgrave Communications, 2(1), 1-9.

*The objectives of this Fellowship are to:*

- i. Accelerate T1D research by supporting promising Australian researchers, fostering innovative and novel exploration.
- ii. Cultivate independence among early to mid career scientists in the T1D field, fostering a trajectory toward self-directed research.
- iii. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, transcending traditional research boundaries.
- iv. Enable capacity building via mentoring, leadership and supervision capabilities that will lead to diversify career pathways and bring fresh perspectives into the candidate's research.
- v. Establish a potent network of emerging talents for impactful national and international T1D research.

This part-time research Fellowship has been designed to offer flexible arrangements that accommodate the Fellow's existing research commitments while also fostering substantial growth, leading to research independence. Successful applicants are required to present a research project with strong translational potential that they will engage with throughout the duration of the Fellowship.

Central to this Fellowship lies the pivotal mentor-mentee collaboration. This initiative is designed to facilitate high-quality mentorship for the Fellows, extending beyond their immediate supervisors and collaborators. The scope of mentorship encompasses academics from diverse backgrounds, including those outside the T1D field and from the industry. This expansive approach aims to amplify research training and professional growth, with a paramount goal of nurturing future leaders in T1D research and clinical impact.

Proposals should be backed by a Mentorship Plan involving at least two Mentors, one of whom is an established leader in T1D research. The other Mentor is anticipated to be an expert outside the T1D domain (including but not limited to expertise in other disease areas, novel technologies, and industry engagement) will contribute fresh perspective and innovative research and career progression directions.

The Fellowship is designed to encompass comprehensive support, covering the Fellow's salary and project-related cost and opportunities for collaboration and career development. *This Fellowship is aimed at EMCRs who currently have less than 12 years post-PhD experience (adjusted to opportunity) and are dedicated to advancing their careers in T1D research. Researchers who have previously secured Career Development Awards or equivalent recognitions are not eligible.*

It is an expectation that the proposed research aligns with JDRF's strategic goals and exhibits a potential for translation, with the ultimate aim of alleviating the burdens of T1D. Applicants are urged to articulate this vision strongly within their submissions to this RFA.

JDRF also welcomes applications that address an area of need outside of these research goals that is yet to be identified and will deliver significant benefit to T1D.

*To ensure alignment, prospective applicants are encouraged to engage in consultations with JDRF Scientific Staff, fostering a clear understanding of their proposal's harmony with the Fellowship's objectives.*

### 3. Eligibility

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria to be eligible for this Fellowship:

- 3.1** Applicants must hold Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent academic degree. Individuals holding a Professorship, or an Honorary position are ineligible to apply for this Award.
- 3.2** Applicant must be named the Principal Investigator in this Fellowship proposal. And be a researcher who has completed a higher degree e.g., PhD less than 12 years (relative to opportunity) ago at the time of submission of application.
- 3.3** Applicants must be affiliated with an Australian university, hospital, research institute, or other comparable institutions. Applications must be submitted by an Australian institution. The Institution submitting the application must provide a Research Office and a Finance Office contact. Applications involving industry collaborations with academia can be submitted, however, additional information will be requested on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.4** Demonstrate strong commitment to T1D research. Strong commitment is defined by:
  - Research Focus and Impact: Consistent dedication to T1D research. This may include a record of publications, presentations, or projects specifically focused on advancing treatment, prevention, or cures for T1D.
  - Career Trajectory and Professional Development: Present a clear trajectory demonstrating an ongoing commitment to T1D research as a central component of their career aspirations.
- 3.5** Dedicate at least 0.4 FTE towards research supported by this Fellowship.
- 3.6** Applicants must be supported by Mentors, with at least one mentor working in the field of T1D research.
- 3.7** Although there are no citizenship requirements for this Fellowship, awardees must be eligible to work in Australia for the length of the proposed project. To assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, JDRF encourages applications from individuals with disabilities, and members of minority groups underrepresented in the Australian T1D research landscape.

### 4. Exclusion Criteria

- 4.1** Applications requesting support for less than 0.4 FTE towards research activities will not be considered.
- 4.2** Applicants currently enrolled in a PhD or with more than 12 years of post-doctoral experience are not eligible.
- 4.3** Researchers who have previously secured a JDRF Career Development Award or equivalent recognitions are not eligible.
- 4.4** It is a requirement of this Award that the proposed research activity does not duplicate previous work carried out by the Mentors research group or elsewhere. However, the

use of preliminary data obtained through previous research led by the Mentors is allowed only if it supports and strengthens the hypotheses of the proposed research.

- 4.5** If at any time during the assessment process JDRF or the review panel deems the research plan to either duplicate or significantly overlap with a previous, current, or planned project (in Australia or overseas) the proposal will be excluded from further consideration.
- 4.6** If at any time during the review process JDRF decides that an application falls within one of the following exclusion criteria the application will be deemed ineligible and will be excluded from further consideration:
- i. Applications that do not provide all required information outlined in Sections 6 and 10.
  - ii. Applications that describe exploratory research purely for the acquisition of data.

## 5. Funding

This *Fellowship* will provide **funding for up to \$135,000 in total for a period of up to two years**, subject to sufficient funding being available and continued satisfactory progress of the study. **A maximum of three (3) Fellows will be awarded.**

JDRF reserves the right to recommend levels, duration and scope of funding which may differ from those requested in the application.

Up to \$120,000 in total can be contributed to the salary component of the budget. Salary requests must be consistent with the established salary structure of the applicant's institution. [The NHMRC's salary support guideline](#) can be used as a reference for salary levels with respect to career stage.

Fellows are expected to commit between 0.4 to 0.6 FTE dedicated research time to the project outlined in the proposal. Fellows cannot use this time to engage in clinical, financial, administrative, or managerial activity beyond those directly related to the research to which the funding applies.

Up to 15,000 in total can be used to support the Fellow's Mentoring Plan. This allocation should be decided in consultation with their designated Mentors. These funds can be used towards direct research costs associated with the project, and/or for enhancing the Fellow's career progression, including endeavours such as international laboratory visits, skill advancement training, and other relevant career development activities.

This is a Fellowship Award and does not provide support for indirect costs associated with the research being conducted by the applicant but funded through separate avenues such as but not limited to basic facilities and equipment, organisational overheads and/or infrastructure costs. Hence, indirect costs must not be included in the budget.

Institutions receiving grants awarded by JDRF Australia through the T1DCRN are however eligible for recovering indirect costs via the Research Block Grants (RBG) self-assessment system. Grants from the T1DCRN is also compliant with the current Category 1 criteria outlined by the RBG institutional self-assessment process. Income from the T1DCRN has been previously listed in the Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR, 2018-2022).

More information about the self-assessment system for institutions, which helps determine R&D income category, can be found [here](#).

## 6. Application Requirements

All applications must be submitted via JDRF's grant management portal RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>). All templates are provided in RMS360. All required fields in RMS360 must be completed. In addition, the following materials must be included in the application. A user guide for submitting application using RMS360 is available [here](#).

**6.1 Proposal Synopsis** (*1 page maximum, use template*) Summary of project details and disclosure. Signatures required.

**6.2 Research Plan** (*5 pages maximum excluding references, use template*) that provides the following information:

- Significance and rationale of proposed research.
- Research aims.
- Description of study design and methods.
- Potential pitfalls and mitigation strategies.
- Potential translational impact and advantage over existing approaches.

**6.3 Bio-sketches** (*4 pages maximum, use template*) of the Applicant as the Principal Investigator (PI) and the Mentors (as the Co-PIs) must be provided as a minimum. Bio-sketches for any additional named Co-PIs and Key Personnel should also be provided. Applicants must outline the relevance of their experience related the proposed research and describe their ability to lead the investigation and conduct the proposed research activities.

**6.4 Mentoring Plan** (*2 pages maximum, use template*) including details of how the Mentors will support the Applicant in the course of the proposed research, and provide opportunities for training and development into an independent research leader in the field. A cross-disciplinary approach including provision for lab visits and training will be considered strongly.

**6.5 Applicant Statement** (*2 pages maximum, use template*). Applicants must include a statement of career goals and indicate the relevance of these goals to T1D research. The statement should demonstrate commitment to the field of T1D and include how the proposed research will contribute to the Applicant's career development in T1D research; how this Fellowship will contribute to the Applicant's future career plans; and any other planned formal or informal activities that will aid the Applicant in establishing a career as a leader in T1D research.

**6.6 Budget and Justification** (*Use templates*). A budget for each grant year with justification for the use of funds must be provided. Please consult your Mentors and Institution's Research Officer to prepare the budget.

**6.7 Letters of Reference.** Applicants must submit *three* letters of reference- two in support of their application from each of the Mentors and the other from the head of the department (or equivalent) where the Applicant will be primarily based. The letter from the head of department must confirm the Applicant's c appointment and support the proposed

research responsibility vs clinical loading. Letters must on official institutional letterheads and signed.

## 7. Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria and respective weighting percentages will be taken into consideration by the review panel to determine alignment of eligible applications with the T1DCRN operating principles:

### **The Applicant (40%)**

- i. Capacity to undertake the proposed research.
- ii. Potential to sustain an independent research career.
- iii. The expected impact of the Award on the research career trajectory of the Applicant.
- iv. Evidence of commitment to the objectives of this Fellowship and to the field of T1D.

### **The Mentors (20%)**

- i. Research performance in a field relevant to T1D.
- ii. Translatability of skills from other areas outside of T1D.
- iii. Track-record of successful training and mentoring.
- iv. Quality of the Mentoring Plan including details of how the Mentor will support the capacity of the Applicant to undertake the proposed research.
- v. Ability of the Mentoring Plan to provide the recipient with the capacity and opportunity to develop an independent portfolio of innovative, high-quality research.

### **Project Quality and Impact (30%)**

- i. Scientific merit of the Applicant's proposed research including the appropriateness of the design, methods and analyses to adequately address the aims and objectives.
- ii. Potential for the existing clinical research project to produce innovative benefit to the T1DCRN and the Australian and international community.
- iii. Potential for the Applicant's proposed research project to develop the Applicant's expertise in collaborative research on a larger scale.

### **Research Environment (10%)**

- i. Evidence of a nurturing and collaborative research environment.
- ii. Availability of the necessary resources and facilities to complete the proposed research.
- iii. Access to resources to support the Investigator during and after the end this Fellowship.



## 8. Overview of the Application Process

Applicants must register/login to JDRF's online grants management portal RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>) to access the RFA, supporting documents and templates.

JDRF will check applications for compliance with eligibility (Sections 3 and 4). A review panel of national and international experts will assess the scientific merit and quality of the proposed research, mentoring plan, the potential of the research to advance knowledge and translate into outcomes for patients and its alignment with JDRF's research goals and eventually reduce burden of T1D.

A scoring system based on the Selection Criteria outlined in Section 7 will be used to rate each application by each individual expert. Reviewers with a declared conflict of interest for any application will be exempt from scoring.

Based on the Selection Criteria the review panel will prepare a ranking and provide to the board of JDRF a recommendation if applications are suitable for funding. The JDRF Australia Board is responsible for final approval of funding, including budget allocation. Please note that JDRF or the reviewers may suggest changes to the research plan and budget at any stage during the review process.

Applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of their application by January 2024. JDRF will work with the successful candidate(s) to develop performance-based milestones which will be monitored by JDRF to ensure satisfactory progress of the Project. A Funding `1 will be forwarded for review and execution to the grantee's administrating institution.

## 9. Contractual Requirements

### 9.1 Funding Agreement

Funding will be provided by JDRF to the Administering Institution of successful Applicants. Award recipients will be required to sign a Funding Agreement with JDRF Australia. An [Agreement template](#) is available from JDRF website. A condition of application to this RFA is provision of certification of the PI, Co-PI(s), Mentors and their institutions to have read and agreed to abide by the terms of the Agreement.

JDRF has no obligation in respect of this RFA including any funding, unless and until JDRF and the successful Applicant(s) have executed the formal Agreement. The Agreement template will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- i. A payment schedule dependent upon the achievement of performance milestones. JDRF will determine such milestones to be included in the Agreement in consultation with the relevant Investigators.
- ii. An obligation to comply with all relevant JDRF Policies as further detailed in the Agreement.

JDRF reserves the right to require changes to the [Agreement template](#) to address specific needs and circumstances of an application.

### 9.2 Consent to Co-funding

JDRF actively seeks co-funding opportunities with other funding bodies and partner institutions. In applying in response to this RFA, Applicants consent to information about their application being shared with other funding bodies that are specifically interested in supporting the research and related activities generated through the T1DCRN.

### 9.3 Publications and Open Access

The T1DCRN is committed to the timely publication and dissemination of all information and materials developed under T1DCRN funding and must also comply with the [Australian Research Council Open Access Policy](#). Recipients of this Award must also comply with this policy and must take steps to make available all generated project materials for publication and wider dissemination. The sharing of data will be supported by clear policies and guidelines, as well as mechanisms to satisfy this requirement.

## 10. Submission Instructions and Checklist

### 10.1 Instructions

Applications must be submitted online using JDRF’s online grants management system RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>). Submission instructions and FAQs are available [here](#). *Please contact JDRF Administrative Staff if you require assistance.*

Information submitted as part of the application is collected and stored in accordance with the JDRF Australia’s [Privacy Policy](#). All parties involved in or associated with an application must declare at the date of submission any Conflict of Interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of the application.

JDRF will only consider complete applications that meet Application formatting requirements as required in the templates provided in RMS360. Scanned documents are not acceptable.

A submission is complete if:

- It includes all the documents listed in the submission checklist below.
- All mandatory fields in RMS360 are complete.

### 10.2 Submission Checklist

Item	Template Provided	Instructions for RMS360
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Synopsis	Yes	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Plan	Yes	Upload in “Proposal Research Plan” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Bio-sketches	Yes	PI/Co-PIs bio sketches should be uploaded to investigator’s profile. Bio-sketches will append to the application.  Key Personnel bio sketches upload in “Additional Attachments” tab.

<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring Plan	Yes	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Statement	Yes	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget	Yes	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab + Complete “Budget” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Justification	Yes	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab + Complete “Budget” tab.
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Reference (3)	No	Upload in “Additional Attachments” tab.

### 11. Program Contacts

*If you would like to discuss the alignment of your proposal to this RFA, please consult:*

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 Scientific Program Manager  
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*If you have enquires relating to using RMS360, please consult:*

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