



Austin Medical Research Foundation

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2025

For Funding Commencing in 2026

The AMRF has been supporting researchers at the Austin Health precinct for more than 50 years. Whilst the amount of money awarded is small in comparison to other schemes, the impact of the funding often leads to future success for the applicant.

The grants awarded by the Austin Medical Research Foundation are for a one year period, with the major aim of strengthening research at the Austin Health precinct.

All applications are reviewed by the AMRF Research Committee and the prime consideration in the award of research grants is the scientific merit of the project.

The following rules apply:

ELIGIBILITY

- Independent investigators with a research higher degree (i.e. PhD or equivalent) are eligible to apply for an AMRF grant.
- Research Officers with a research higher degree employed on a grant (i.e. NHMRC, MRFF) may make an application, but this should be on a topic distinct from that on which they are already funded/employed.
- If the applicant holds an appointment as Research Fellow, Research Officer or Senior Research Officer, details must be provided on the source of their salary, and any overlap with their funded research and the research proposed in this application.

INELIGIBILITY

- PhD students, MD students, Research Assistants are not eligible to apply.
- Researchers with Honorary appointments are not eligible to apply.

APPLICATION

- One application only will be accepted from any research group. Multiple applications will prejudice all investigator's grant applications.
- The Principal Investigator must be located at an Austin Health campus. The research must be carried out at an Austin Health campus.
- If equipment (> \$5,000) is requested for the project, a detailed specification and a quote must be attached to the application. This does not apply to ordinary consumables.
- Applications must be submitted on the official AMRF form and adhere to the guidelines on acceptable font and maximum characters.
- The application should include a short lay summary indicating the nature and significance of the work in terms that may be used in a report for general distribution.
- If an application has been submitted to an outside granting body for a similar or the same project, applicants must clearly identify what is different from other grant applications or attach their other submission as back-up evidence.
- Electronic applications must be in the format of one complete PDF named **SURNAME_AMRF Grant in Aid for Medical Research Application**. File sizes should not exceed 2Mb.
- Please note that hard copies with 'wet ink' are **not** required. A Head of Department signature is **not** required, except for the Bernie Sweet Research Fellowship.
- The electronic file must be submitted by email to austinMRF@austin.org.au by the **closing date of Friday, 19th September 2025**.

BERNIE SWEET CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

- Information regarding this Clinical Research Fellowship is on page **4** of these guidelines.
- The appropriate Head of Department Certification must be completed in the application form.

EARLY CAREER INNOVATION SEEDING GRANT

- Information regarding the Early Career Innovation Seeding Grant is on page **5** of these guidelines.

ETHICS IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Research Projects including clinical trials must have the approval of the appropriate Austin Health Ethics Committee.
- Funds will not be remitted to successful applicants until evidence of ethics approval is received.
- Ethics clearance is not required at the time of submission of the application.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- In assessing applications for funding, the AMRF Research Committee takes into consideration scientific merit in addition to the following objectives:
 - i) Provide "seed funding": encourage applications for research into novel areas.
 - ii) Support for applicants with an established track record who have been unsuccessful in applications to major bodies. This would apply to applications in the borderline area for funding (i.e. near misses).
- AMRF may seek the advice of expert assessors in evaluating an application.

FINAL and PROGRESS REPORTS for AMRF-funded projects

- Both final reports (2y after completion of an AMRF-funded project, i.e. funded in 2024) or Progress reports (i.e. funded in 2025) **MUST** be included with the application.
- **If such reports are not included with the application, the grant will be removed from consideration for the grant round.**
 - **All reports must include information on**
 - If an abstract was submitted to the annual Austin Health Research Meeting.
 - If AMRF support was acknowledged in publications and presentations.

NOTIFICATION

- The outcome of applications will be notified to Principal Investigator.
- The AMRF Research Committee applies a rigorous and impartial selection process, and its decision is final.
- If an investigator has submitted an application to an outside granting body (i.e. MRFF, NHMRC) for a similar or the same project and they are successful, they must notify the AMRF of the result and describe how this influences their request for AMRF funds. If there is overlap between the grants, a final decision will be made by the AMRF Research Committee as to whether the AMRF grant will be awarded.

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS – please note new conditions compared to previous years

- All grants are for one year only and access to funds depends on clearance by the relevant Ethics Committee(s).
- AMRF stipulates the following as conditions in respect of every grant it awards:
 - All funds must be expended on the grant project within 12 months. After 12 months, the entitlement to the award will lapse. If unprecedented or unforeseen circumstances interfere with the conduct of research within the stipulated timeframe, a variation can be

raised to seek an extension. The grant may be extended for six months under exceptional circumstances. Beyond six months, extension of time will not be granted except in extraordinary circumstances after applying in writing to the AMRF Research Committee.

- The funds must only be utilised for the research described in the application and in accordance with the submitted budget.
- Funds are only to be used for projects conducted at an Austin Health precinct. Should the grantee resign from Austin Health or one of its affiliated organisations, the outstanding funds will be returned to the Foundation. Grants are not transferable.
- Grants will be provided on expense-payment basis or reimbursement basis. Upfront lump sum payment for the total grant will not be given. All overseas payments will be on reimbursement basis only.



Bernie Sweet Clinical Research Fellowship 2025

Information for Applicants

For Funding Commencing in 2026

Note: This is the final year for the Bernie Sweet award.

The AMRF Board wishes to acknowledge the 20+ years of service by Associate Professor Bernie Sweet to the Foundation by awarding a Clinical Research Fellowship named in his honour.

The broad intention of this fellowship is to help the early career development of a clinical research fellow, by providing funding for research project costs and/or salary. The funding of capital equipment costs is excluded.

1. Applicants should have a medical degree and have graduated with a Ph.D. degree within the last 5 years. They cannot have previously received the “Bernie Sweet Clinical Research Fellowship”.
3. The value of the award is \$25,000 over 1 year (not renewable).
4. The clinical research undertaken must conform to the principles set out by the NHMRC’s “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research” and have approval from the Austin Health Ethics Committees.
5. Applications should be submitted using the standard AMRF Grant Application Form. Please tick the box “Do you wish to apply for the Bernie Sweet Clinical Research Fellowship?”.
6. A CV of the applicant must be submitted including publications over the last 5 years.
7. **A letter of recommendation from the Head of Department must be submitted.**
8. Criteria for decision will include consideration of:
 - the track record of the applicant (as evidenced by academic achievement and previous research); and
 - the importance of the research project (significance to Fellow’s career direction, scientific significance).

The closing date for applications is **5:00 pm, Friday, 19th September 2025**.

For more information, please email austinMRF@austin.org.au

This is the final year for the Bernie Sweet Award, but new and exciting opportunities are on the horizon for next year.



Early Career Innovation Seeding Grant 2025

Information for Applicants

For Funding Commencing in 2026

The early postdoctoral period can be an exciting time for new research ideas that fall outside an established research program. Testing new “left-field” hypotheses is inherently risky and difficult to fund.

The Austin Medical Research Foundation would like to provide research seed funding for innovative ideas outside existing research directions. We are seeking applications from individuals in laboratories or research groups that can provide the certainty of ongoing infrastructure and support as the basis for testing a new concept.

The Foundation will support a 1-year seeding grant valued up to \$20,000 for innovative research.

ELIGIBILITY

The innovation seeding grants will be available to postdoctoral researchers with no more than 10 years’ postdoctoral experience (considering career interruptions). The supervisor of the applicant must support the application and verify the details of this support.

APPLICATION

Applicants must provide a clear explanation of the nature of the innovative proposal, including how it is novel and outside their ongoing research program.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

An expert panel convened by the Foundation will review applications based on:

- Innovation
- Potential significance
- Scientific quality
- Track record
- Supportive laboratory environment

The Board of the Foundation will decide on grants after advice from its Research Committee.

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

Please refer to the general guidelines above.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted on the official form and must adhere to the guidelines on acceptable font and maximum characters. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is complete and accurate.

Electronic applications must be in the format of one complete PDF named **SURNAME_AMRF Innovation Seeding Grant Application** and submitted by email to austinMRF@austin.org.au by **5:00 pm, Friday, 19th September 2025**.

REPORTING COMMITMENT

The successful applicant will be required to provide a report to the Board of the Austin Medical Research Foundation at the completion of the project.