



**Norman Beischer
Medical Research
Foundation™**

ABN 26 005 864 282

*Norman Beischer Early-Mid Career
Clinical Research Fellowship for Maternal and
Perinatal Health and Gynaecology*

Guidelines for Applicants

*Applications close 12 noon, Melbourne time,
Wednesday 21 August 2024
For Fellowships to be awarded in 2025*



Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation

Level 1, 459 Toorak Road, Toorak Victoria 3142

1. Background

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation supports and promotes improvements in the reproductive health of women and in the health of their babies and infants in the areas of obstetrics, gynaecology and neonatology. It actively supports research into obstetrics, neonatology and gynaecology and the prevention, control and treatment of pregnancy complications, gynaecological diseases and related problems. We do this by funding clinically based scientific research by both leading and emerging researchers. We use this research to educate and inform medical practice in Australia and elsewhere.

2. Overview of the Beischer Foundation

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation was established in 1981 by Professor Norman Beischer to enable the funding of clinically based medical research, principally conducted by persons associated with the University of Melbourne, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology then located at the Mercy Maternity Hospital in East Melbourne. Since its founding, the Foundation has evolved to support clinically based medical and scientific research into women's and babies' health issues.

3. Fellowship Description

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation intends to award one clinical research Fellowship of \$220,000 per annum for three years. The Fellow should hold a clinical appointment relevant to the Foundation's areas of interest.

A Norman Beischer Clinical Research Fellowship will provide an opportunity for outstanding clinician researchers to be recognised with a prestigious named, competitive fellowship.

The Fellowships are targeted at those who have completed a PhD (or equivalent qualification) and are early- to mid-career researchers. Applicants should have obtained their PhD less than seven years prior to the submission of the application. Career disruptions will be taken into account as outlined in Section 4 below.

It is expected that the clinician researcher will hold a medical clinical appointment at a university affiliated medical teaching hospital. An academic appointment will be judged favourably. The applicant must commit to at least 0.4 EFT to focus solely on their research as well as spending a minimum 0.4 EFT undertaking clinical work in support of obstetrics, gynaecology, or neonatology. The intent of the support by the Foundation is that such support should lead to these clinicians being able to undertake longer-term research careers and, hopefully, funding from other bodies.

The clinicians targeted by the Fellowship program will be Obstetricians, Neonatologists and Gynaecologists or clinicians supporting healthy obstetric outcomes or dealing with issues associated with gynaecology or neonatology. They should be uniquely positioned to lead "bench to bedside" translational research where the results of their research can be directly linked to new ways to treat patients or improve patient care. The Fellowship will protect the research time of the clinician and encourage their further development as well as delivering on the Foundation's purpose.

To be awarded a Fellowship:

- the potential Fellow will be an outstanding clinician and researcher and
- be supported by the hospital/university department to which they are attached in the form of
 - support from the Department leadership;
 - support from senior research/clinician leaders;
 - infrastructure support, including wet and dry lab space and facilities, as required; and
 - collaborative links with its clinical centre and partners.

Applicants should be Obstetricians, Neonatologists, Gynaecologists, or medical clinicians working in these fields aiming to achieve the best outcomes for women and babies. The research should address women's gynaecological health, the care of pregnancy or seek to achieve positive impact on the first twelve months of postnatal life.

In awarding the Fellowships, the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation aims to increase the number of research-focussed clinicians working to solve health problems in the areas of obstetrics, neonatology, and gynaecology. The Fellowships will increase the number of healthcare professionals transitioning through medical research careers. It is hoped to increase the translation of research into clinical practice and so improve patient outcomes.

Applicants are required to have a defined research project that will address an area of clinical need and to provide evidence that they are supported by an institution based in Victoria. Those awarded a Fellowship will be required to provide regular reports to the Foundation and to participate in appropriate conferences or seminars.

4. Eligible Applicants

The Norman Beischer Clinical Research Fellowship is open to clinical researchers who:

- are Australian or New Zealand citizens or have permanent residency in Australia. Applicants must also be based in Victoria, Australia for the funding period;
- have a specialist qualification and work in areas of, obstetrics, neonatology or gynaecology;
- hold a postgraduate research qualification (PhD or equivalent) and have research experience with a demonstrated capacity to undertake independent translational research; and
- are early- to mid-career researchers with less than seven years' experience post completion of a PhD (or equivalent qualification) and committed to pursuing a leadership role in women's or infants' health. (Note: as outlined below, career disruptions are taken into account when considering the seven-year period.) Potential applicants who have only recently obtained their PhD may wish to defer applying until they have demonstrated their capacity to obtain research grants. The experience of applicants will be considered by the interview panel.

Candidates should have a record of high-quality research outputs and the capacity to build collaborations across industry, research institutions, clinical partners and/or disciplines.

Applicants for the Fellowship must be qualified as a health professional in an applicable discipline and be registered to practice in Australia.

Applicants need to hold a clinical appointment at a clinical site affiliated with a teaching hospital. The Fellowship covers 0.4-0.6 EFT. Information needs to be provided about the applicant's clinical appointment.

Senior established investigators will not be considered. Those who are more than seven years post PhD are ineligible.

Career disruptions will be taken into account. Career disruptions are based on NHMRC definitions and are defined as follows:

“A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, either due to absence (for periods of one month or greater) and/or long-term partial return to work, to accommodate carers' responsibilities or illness. The career disruption must have occurred post the date of the letter advising that the thesis was passed and resulted in significantly reduced research productivity or nil research output.”

The Fellowship may be interrupted or taken part time for career disruptions (as outlined above), subject to approval by the Foundation. However, it is expected that for candidates working part time, the proportion of clinical and research time should be maintained as per the original application (0.4 to 0.6).

Applicants are eligible to hold a maximum of one Norman Beischer Clinical Research Fellowship during their career.

Should a successful applicant have been awarded an Innovation Grant from the Foundation in the same year and for the same project as the research covered by the Fellowship, the funds awarded for the Innovation Grant must be returned.

5. Amount of Funding and Duration

The value of a Fellowship is \$220,000 per annum over three years. A Fellowship may be extended for a further year with funding of up to \$220,000 in exceptional circumstances. Such an extension will be assessed and determined by the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation at its discretion.

The time devoted to the Fellowship should not be less than 0.4 EFT and not more than 0.6 EFT.

The Fellowship includes all on-costs, and no further contribution will be paid.

It is anticipated that the institution at which the Fellow is based will provide support in the form of space, laboratory support, mentoring etc.

The Fellowship will be paid to the Fellow's supporting institution (a university or hospital) which will be expected to administer the grant of funds.

During the term of the Fellowship, should the Fellow obtain nationally competitive salary support (say, from NHMRC), the Fellowship may continue, and the Fellowship funds can be used for research support.

6. Ethics

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation acknowledges that all research involving humans must follow the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018. The Foundation requires that all research funded by it involving humans has received ethical approval by an authorised Human Research Ethics Committee. The Foundation also requires that funded researchers are familiar with both the National Statement and the Code of Responsible Conduct of Research. The Clinical Research Fellow should have a good understanding of the National Statement and the Code and take responsibility for the conduct of the research project.

The Foundation's Fellowship Panel, in assessing Fellowship applications, will give consideration to ethical aspects of the particular research projects.

The Foundation expects that both researchers, and their supporting institutions, adhere to the ethical conduct of research. The Foundation should be informed by the Clinical Research Fellow of any decision by a Human Research Ethics Committee that impacts on the conduct of the research funded by The Foundation.

Prior to the release of Fellowship funds, a copy of the letter of approval from the relevant Ethics Committee must be submitted to the Foundation.

7. Supporting Organisation Requirements

Applications **must** be made under the auspices of a Victorian hospital, research institute or university that is charitable by law. The supporting organisation must provide a letter:

- Certifying that they are charitable and hold appropriate charity status;
- have in place policies and procedures for the management of the grant funds;
- have in place policies for the proper conduct of research in relation to ethics and good scientific conduct;
- accept that the funding agreement with the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation will be the basis for funding;
- undertake to assist in meeting the reporting requirements for the Fellowship and the relevant project; and
- state why the particular candidate is well qualified to receive a Fellowship.

In the letter, the Supporting Organisation must provide evidence that there is a suitable environment in which to undertake the research and to support the Fellow. The Supporting Organisation is expected to ensure that there is effective supervision and mentoring of the researcher and have a process for evaluating the effectiveness and suitability of any supervisory and/or mentoring arrangements. The Supporting Organisation will provide the majority of the facilities and infrastructure required to undertake the proposed research.

The relevant delegate of the Supporting Organisation must certify in the letter that they approve of, and endorse, the proposed project.

8. Funding Agreement

If an application is successful, the Supporting Organisation will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation.

Intellectual property and data developed in whole or in part by Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation Grant funding are the property of the Supporting Organisation and the Fellow, unless otherwise agreed.

9. Assessment

Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation staff will initially screen applications to ensure that eligibility criteria have been met.

A panel appointed by the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation will assess submissions against the selection criteria.

Selected applicants will be invited to an interview with the Panel. Short-listed applicants will be advised of the date of interview as soon as possible. Interviews are likely to be held in Melbourne on Friday 4 October 2024.

The Panel will review the letter of support provided by the institution and consider the comments by the institution as to why the candidate is deserving of being awarded the Fellowship.

The Panel may require Applicants to provide references or to nominate referees who may be contacted for comment about the Applicant.

The Panel will:

- rank applications based on the specific selection criteria weighting (Refer to Section 10); and
- make a recommendation to the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation on the applicant to be awarded the Fellowship.

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation will not provide reasons to any candidate as to why they were not awarded a Fellowship.

Neither the lodgement of an application, nor the making of any recommendation by the Fellowship Panel confers any entitlement upon the Applicant.

The Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation reserves the right not to award a Fellowship or to vary the terms and conditions of any Fellowship.

10. Selection Criteria

All applications will be assessed against the specific selection criteria and weightings. In addition to the specific selection criteria described above, the research must meet the following objectives to be considered for funding:

- The project is clinical research with the potential to translate into improved medical care;
- Clinical adoption of the research findings is anticipated to occur, and the research could have a clinical impact in a reasonable timeframe;
- The results of the research will be communicated to other researchers, clinicians, students, consumers and health care decision-makers;
- The research has the potential to build clinical research capacity and skills in Australia; and
- The research is likely to result in two or more papers in peer reviewed journals.

Selection criteria

Number	Criteria	Weighting
1	<p>Research Proposal</p> <p>The research is designed to address an important problem or unmet clinical need in patient care. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the clinical need being addressed in the research • How the research will result in improved patient outcomes • The quality of the research, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feasibility ○ Rationale ○ Methodology ○ Timeframe ○ Innovation. 	40%
2	<p>Applicant Research Output and Leadership (This assessment will be made considering the period since the applicant has obtained a PhD)</p> <p>Candidates should have a record of high-quality research outputs and the capacity to build collaborations across industry, research institutions, clinical partners and/or disciplines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of applicant to enable independent research • Quality of Research Output (with emphasis on the past five years) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants and profile • Capacity to undertake the proposed research project • Community involvement • The number, quality and influence of the publications • Prizes and awards. • Personal attributes of the Applicant 	50%

3	<p>Supporting Organisation’s Research Environment</p> <p>Support for applicant</p> <p>Support for conducting research, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research team • Existing infrastructure • Mentoring and training • Collaboration • Evidence of cross-disciplinary approaches with researchers, clinicians, consumers, clinician-managers, health care policy makers, health economists, implementation scientists, clinical epidemiologists and/or industry. 	10%
	TOTAL	100%

11. Award of Fellowship

An offer to award a Fellowship will be made to the applicant as the initiator of the application. Acceptance of the grant must be made by the Supporting Organisation.

The Supporting Organisation associated with the successful applicant will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation.

12. How to Apply

All applicants must complete a Norman Beischer Clinical Research Fellowship Application Form that is available on the Foundation’s website: www.nbmf.org.au

Applications are to be submitted along with the Applicant’s curriculum vitae and the required letter of support from the supporting institution to admin@nbmf.org.au by no later than 12 noon on Wednesday 21 August 2024.

For any questions about the application or applying, please contact Andrew Brookes, Executive Director, Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation at admin@nbmf.org.au

Applications close 12 noon, Melbourne time, Wednesday 21 August 2024. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

It is anticipated that selected applicants will be interviewed on Friday 4 October 2024.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application by the end of October 2024.

13. Privacy and Confidentiality

All information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential.

Applicants consent to the information supplied as part of their application being disclosed for the purposes of the evaluation and administration of the grant. Such disclosure includes, but is not limited to, members of Evaluation Panel, relevant employees of the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation and the Directors of the Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation.

Applicants acknowledge that announcement of the awarding of the Fellowship will involve the dissemination of information to the public about the general nature of the Fellowship and with agreed detail about the successful Applicant.