

## ARC Applications – Navigating the Medical Research Policy

Prof Fiona Cameron, Senior Executive Director with the ARC, was on campus 6 Sep, primarily to give a presentation on How to Become a Good ARC Assessor, as part of Research Week. Prof Cameron also agreed to facilitate a workshop / roundtable discussion on complying with the [ARC Medical Research Policy](#).

Given that researchers have had applications ruled ineligible under the Policy, the purpose of the workshop was to develop a better understanding of the Policy and associated ARC processes, including gaining insight into how the ARC determines if an application complies with the Policy.

Applying for ARC funding won't be a possibility for everyone, but eligible areas may have some overlap with our Faculty (eligible areas are listed in the Medical Research Policy as per link above).

### **How do I write/pitch my research for an ARC application?**

The focus of your ARC grant application needs to be strictly focused on the current context (eg. the focus of *this proposal* is to further develop the equipment to deliver ultrasound waves...and in the future, this technology could be applicable to medical and engineering needs);

### **Should I complete the Medical Use Statement?**

There is a Medical Use Statement that is optional to include. If there is any possibility that the application may appear to be medical research, it is always better to include information under this heading (example given in attached slide presentation).

### **What style of writing should I adopt compared to writing NHMRC applications?**

Think of the response from ARC staff (is this proposal 'medical'?) and then pitch your proposal accordingly.

### **Other points of interest**

The ARC may seek further advice from the Office of NHMRC, the Administering Organisation or any other relevant party when determining the eligibility of a proposal.

## ***Eligibility Examples in Health and Medical Sciences***

### ***Biological Sciences and Biotechnology (BSB)***

#### Example 1

This project examines the ability to regenerate organs in an animal model and in doing so aims to contribute to knowledge on cell replacement. Using lung damage as a model we plan to investigate the behaviour of circulating peripheral blood monocytes and whether they might be involved in the pathways for stimulating regeneration. This animal model is ideal to understand this perplexing problem. Ultimately, understanding how to regenerate organs in an animal system may allow replacement in other animals including humans.

Eligibility Comment: This example is **eligible** for ARC support as it aims to understand fundamental mammalian biological processes (1b).

#### Example 2

Australia has the highest level in the world of sun induced cancer. These can be aggressive tumours with a high mortality rate. The molecular basis of these diseases specifically, Sun Cancer 1 (SC1), is thought to be genetic.

This project aims to use basic molecular biological techniques to investigate the implications of Dumpy Duck1 (DpDY1) gene pathways and sun induced pathologies, specifically the effect of DpDY1 signalling on P53 a common tumour suppressor gene pathway in an established mouse model of SC1. This knowledge will expand our understanding of genetic pathways leading to SC1 and enable the search for new pharmaceuticals to combat SC1.

Eligibility Comment: This example is **not eligible** for ARC support as its primary aim is to better understand a human disease (2a) and uses animal models to understand human health conditions (2b).

#### Example 3

This project aims to explore the determinants of healthy living into old age, evaluating both a new and existing set of biomarkers associated with the aging process. Our earlier work has indicated a number of biomarkers for age related phenotypes which can vary according to age-related problems. In the project we aim to extend this work to a broader set of indicative biomarkers for better understanding of normal aging processes. Samples have been collected from healthy older subjects and do not include participants known to have any pathology.

Eligibility Comment: This example is **eligible** for ARC support as it does not have health or medical goals, but aims to understand the normal human ageing process (1c). Although human samples will be used, it does not render the proposal ineligible as they are only used to support this primary goal, and not to understand, monitor or treat a human health condition.

#### Example 4

In some forms of dementia, aberrant proteins have been seen in the early phases of disease, which have been detected in patient's blood and in more invasive biopsies. This project will use advanced biosensors and algorithms combined with fluorescently tagged specific biological markers that would provide a platform to diagnose dementia based on an increased understanding of the relationship between detection of aberrant proteins and disease. This project will develop an accurate preclinical diagnostic test screen for dementia variants using advanced imaging techniques to detect these proteins in dementia patient's samples and in established animal models of dementia.

Eligibility Comment: This example is **not eligible** for ARC support as its primary aims are the better understanding of human disease (2a), human disease diagnosis (2a), and it uses animal models to understand human health conditions (2b).