2026 SHP Clinical Research Fellowship Program: Alzheimer's Disease and Motor Neurone Disease Application Guidelines

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About Sydney Health Partners

Sydney Health Partners (SHP) is an NHMRC-accredited Research Translation Centre working to facilitate the translation of research evidence into better health care delivery and improved patient outcomes. SHP is a collaboration between five major health services (Nepean Blue Mountains, Northern Sydney, Sydney, and Western Sydney Local Health Districts; and the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (at Westmead)), the University of Sydney, and 10 affiliated medical research institutes. One of SHP's goals is to build capacity and capability in the workforce both for translational research and research translation.

Clinical Research Fellowship Program Overview

SHP's Clinical Research Fellowship Program (CRFP) is designed to award **part-time fellowships (0.3-0.4FTE) of two years' duration** that will provide protected time for early career clinician researchers to upskill in translational research methods and implement health care improvement projects whilst remaining in their substantive position.

The Fellowships are dedicated to **supporting clinical/health services translational research that contributes to improved healthcare delivery, improved care experiences, and/or improved quality of life for people living with either Alzheimer's disease or Motor Neurone Disease (MND)**. Up to two Fellowships will be awarded for each health condition (maximum of 4 Fellowships in total).

The Fellowships are made available through funding from **Equity Trustees**, a major Australian independent trustee company (see link).

Fellowship recipients must commence between **1 June 2026 and 30 September 2026,** and conclude their fellowship **within 24 months** of commencing, no later than 30 September 2028. Extensions are **not permitted.**

Objectives

- Support the career development of early-career clinical staff currently working in a clinical setting who wish to combine health research into their career pathway
- Support early-career applicants to develop skills that will enable them to apply for competitive research funding from national agencies and other funding sources
- Support clinical/health services research that contributes to improved healthcare delivery, improved care experiences, and/or improved quality of life for people living with either Alzheimer's disease or MND
- Build collaborative linkages across SHP member organisations and the broader healthcare system to support the translation of evidence-based interventions into routine practice

Fellowship Components

Salary stipend and funding period	Two years of salary support to enable dedicated research time ranging from 0.3-0.4FTE each week (to a maximum of $150,000 for salary and oncosts (i.e. $75,000 per year), whilst Fellows maintain their substantive clinical role. Extension of the Fellowship is not permitted.
Project and educational support	Additional funding of up to $10,000 (total over two years) towards approved research project costs (e.g. data management, publication fees, consumer in research payments) and learning and professional development opportunities relevant to the proposed research.
SHP education and networking	Access to SHP's diverse educational and training events and workshops, including our Implementation Science program, and various training and resources relevant to consumer involvement in research, and clinical trial conduct. Connections to SHP's diverse network of academic and health partners including our Clinical Academic Groups, and links with other research translation centres across Australia.

Eligibility & Ineligibility

Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Be employed as a clinician (from disciplines such as allied health, genetic counselling, medical specialities, midwifery, nursing, pharmacy, public health or other relevant disciplines) and currently working in a clinical setting.
- Be employed by an SHP Health Partner organisation and remain employed by that organisation for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Have tertiary qualifications in health or science, specialised training in research methodologies, and maintain current professional registration as a health practitioner with AHPRA or another National Board.
- Meet the definition of an early career clinician researcher as defined by the CRFP: *a practicing clinician who is within 10 years (relative to opportunity) of either being awarded a PhD or having their first peer-reviewed publication (listed as an author, any order)*.
- Be able to conduct clinical/health services research that contributes to improved healthcare delivery, improved care experiences, and/or improved quality of life for people living with either Alzheimer's disease or MND.
- Have the support of their organisation to take on the Fellowship and undertake the proposed research.

The Research Proposal must:

- Focus on improved healthcare delivery, improved care experiences, and/or improved quality of life for people living with either **Alzheimer's disease or MND**.
- **Include consumers** as research partners.
- be **based in one SHP Partner Health organisation** (see here) and involve at least one other Partner Health organisation as far as this is practical to achieve.

Ineligible Applications

The following applications **will not** be considered:

- Applicants who are not employed by an SHP Health Partner organisation.
- Applicants who are based solely within the University and unable to undertake research in health services settings.
- Project proposals that are not based in an SHP Health Partner organisation.
- Applicants who cannot commit to **a minimum of 0.3 FTE** for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Applicants who are currently enrolled and undertaking PhD studies on a fulltime basis.

Research Proposal Requirements

Applicants must submit a feasible and well-defined project proposal that will form the basis of their Fellowship. The proposal must demonstrate clear relevance to improving healthcare delivery, care experiences, and/or quality of life for people living with **Alzheimer's disease** or **Motor Neurone Disease (MND)**.

Consumer involvement

The proposal must include appropriate involvement of patients, carers and/or other consumers as research partners. Peak bodies such as Dementia Australia and MND Australia may also be appropriate. This is separate from the recruitment of patients or carers as research participants.

Equity-focused proposals

Proposals that address equity of access to health care services for people from under-served communities experiencing Alzheimer's disease or MND (such as those living in rural and regional areas, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, etc.) are especially encouraged.

Health Partner organisation involvement

The proposed research must involve at least two of SHP's five Health Partner organisations (see here). ***Applications that are not based in an SHP Partner Health organisation will not be considered***. External organisations may be included, but only in addition to the SHP partner organisation requirement.

The following outline may assist you in drafting your proposal. It is intended as a guide only.

1. Project title
2. Project collaborators
3. Engagement with and inclusion of consumer partners
4. Background and rationale, including how the research aligns to health service priorities and clinical care
5. Aim(s)/objectives
6. Method/research design (including which Health Partner organisations are involved)
7. Anticipated outcomes and impact of work
8. Planned communication of outcomes to stakeholders (e.g., clinicians, consumers, peak bodies)

Research Timeline and Budget

Please also provide a project timeline for 24 months in a table format with a completion date no later than 30 September 2028 *(maximum 1 page)*, and an indicative budget using the template below.

Indicative Budget	**Year 1**	**Year 2**
Fellowship salary support (0.3-0.4FTE, salary + oncosts)		
Project and educational support (specify how funds will be used)		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		

Allowable Expenses

Salary Support
Backfill of the Fellow's substantive clinical position equivalent to the FTE of this Fellowship, including salary and oncosts.

*Non-Salary Expenses – Project and Educational Support**

- Data management costs
- Health economics or statistical support
- Payments to consumer research partners (using Health Consumers NSW rates)
- Publication costs
- Licence for software
- Transcription costs
- Conference registration (not associated travel costs), capped to a maximum of $3000 over 2 years
- Education and training courses related to the proposed research

** Other items may be considered on request*

Application Requirements

Applicants must complete and submit **all** of the following documents as **one combined PDF**:

- Research Fellowship Expression of Interest form (CRFP-EoI - link)
- Research proposal (maximum 3 pages, with optional extra 1 page for references, see further details below)
- Project timeline (maximum 1 page)
- Indicative budget (maximum 1 page)
- Curriculum Vitae (maximum 5 pages)

- Personal statement of commitment that demonstrates a strong interest in the field of Alzheimer's disease or MND
- Letter of support from the applicant's Head of Department or Discipline, Supervisor, or equivalent confirming:
    - approval of 0.3-0.4 FTE protected research time for 2 years, and
    - access to finance and operational support, and material resources to complete the proposed project
- Letter from the applicant's employing organisation's Director of Research (or equivalent) confirming awareness and support for the Fellowship application and proposed project.

How to Apply

The combined PDF application must include the applicant's surname in the filename. The combined file will comprise 8 documents as listed above. Each component should be clearly labelled.

Applications must be submitted by email to Associate Professor Angela Todd, Research Director SHP, angela.todd@sydney.edu.au, by **5:00 pm on Monday 13 April 2026**. No late applications will be accepted.

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged via email.

Shortlisted applicants must be available to attend an **in-person interview** (up to 30 minutes duration) during the week beginning 11 May 2026.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome by 22 May 2026.

Enquiries regarding the CRFP and application process should be directed to Associate Professor Angela Todd at angela.todd@sydney.edu.au.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by a panel with expertise in translational research. Applications will be assessed using the criteria described below.

Scoring criteria	Score
Clarity and alignment of the research aims with the purposes of the CRFP	15
Quality of the research proposal including feasibility	30
Potential to improve health services and/or quality of life	20
Proposed involvement of patient/consumer partners	15
Demonstrated commitment to Alzheimer's disease or MND (personal statement)	10
Quality of organisational and operational support including support for dedicated release time for research	10
TOTAL	**100**

Fellowship Conditions

Applicants who are awarded an **SHP Research Fellowship** must comply with the following conditions:

- Undertake research-related activity for 0.3-0.4FTE during the Fellowship period
- Remain employed by an SHP Health Partner organisation during the Fellowship period
- Provide a progress report after 1 year, and a final report after 2 years to SHP and Equity Trustees, including a financial statement of expenditure
- Demonstrate satisfactory progress in Year 1 to ensure the Fellowship is funded for the second year
- Be involved in SHP's and Equity Trustees' communications and promotion activities relating to the award and associated research
- Participate in relevant SHP and Equity Trustees' capacity building programs
- Ensure appropriate acknowledgment of the Fellowship funds in any media, publications or presentations arising from the research (wording to be provided by SHP)
- Attend SHP events and/or workshops related to the Fellowship Program.

In awarding this Fellowship, SHP expects that the Fellow will be supported by their Department and employing organisation to complete the Fellowship and research project. This includes ensuring the Fellow's time is protected and their substantive role is back filled for the duration of the Fellowship. Extensions are not permitted.

Funding details

Up to 4 Fellowships are available – two supporting research in Alzheimer's Disease, and two supporting MND research.

Each Fellowship is comprised of Salary Support and Research Project and Education Support:

- Salary Support is up to $75,000 per year for 2 years, paid in in advance at the beginning of each funded year, for **a total maximum of $150,000 ex GST**.
- Each Fellowship also includes **funds of up to $10,000 of non-salary support** for approved Research and Education costs. An up-front payment of $10,000 will be made at the beginning of the first year.

The Fellow and their organisation must be able to invoice Sydney Health Partners via the University of Sydney for the funding.

Funder details

The Fellows have been created by a Grant awarded to Sydney Health Partners from Equity Trustees. The Funds are held by SHP in a University of Sydney account on behalf of Equity Trustees.

Reporting

A 12-month progress report, and final report at the end of the Fellowship period will be required, using a template provided by SHP. Reports must include:

- Overall status of the project
- Contributions of consumer partners
- Any issues arising in the conduct of the project
- Confirmation that the Fellow's clinical position has been back-filled equivalent to the FTE of the Fellowship
- Dissemination of project findings
- Impact of the research
- Plans to apply for additional grant funding

A financial statement of expenditure must be provided with the 12-month progress report, and the final report. Please note, Year 2 funding cannot be released until satisfactory progress is confirmed.