



Seed ('Start-up') research

Guidelines for applicants

Disclaimer

This publication may contain work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website legislation.nsw.gov.au

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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Introduction

About these Guidelines

This Guideline has been prepared by WorkCover NSW to assist eligible organisations to apply for Seed ('Start-up') Research funding under the WorkCover NSW Research Program:

The content of this RFT is comprised of the following sections:

- Section 1 – Eligibility and conditions for applicants
- Section 2 – Developing a proposal
- Section 3 – Submitting an application
- Section 4 – Conditions of contract

Potential Applicants should also read the WorkCover NSW Research Program Framework (the Framework), which provides further information about the Research Program and its funding categories. The Framework is available from workcover.nsw.gov.au

Seed ('Start-up') Research

Seed Funding allows for small, short term funding to be made available to support researchers to undertake projects with a view to leveraging the WorkCover NSW Applied Research funding stream or other national competitive funding schemes.

Under the WorkCover NSW Research Program, Seed ('Start-up') Research:

- Seeks to define objectives and test hypotheses to assist in determining the feasibility of a concept or idea in preparation for undertaking more in-depth research or trials
- Encourages innovation and can measure the capacity of a project to attract further major funds from other funders.

Research priority areas will be identified and published under WorkCover's Research Program, and WorkCover may commission seed research projects relevant to these. However, emerging issues outside the published Research Program that are identified during the funding year may also be addressed through Seed Research projects.

Unsolicited requests for funding may be accepted for evaluation where it can be shown that they are relevant to WorkCover's core business and adequate information has been provided by the applicant to allow for a meaningful, merit-based assessment. In addition, certain probity conditions must be met if entering into direct negotiations with one researcher rather than going to a competitive process. The applicant must include the unique elements that provide this justification. Where proposals do not satisfy these criteria, WorkCover may encourage applicants to resubmit under another stream of funding if the research topic is relevant to WorkCover.

Seed funding will be notionally capped at \$50,000 per grant per annum (although additional funding can be contributed by research partners for collaborative or linkage grant scenarios).

1. Eligibility & conditions for Applicants

Eligibility to submit an Application under the Seed ('Start-up) Research category

Applications for Seed Research funding can be submitted by non-government organisations (NGOs) from the academic, health and research, and education sectors, as well as non-profit industry groups.

Conditions

Conditions applying to Seed Research funding include:

1. Applicants must be registered for GST and provide their Australian Business Number (ABN) when completing the Application Form. WorkCover NSW will not enter into a contract with an Applicant that does not have an ABN and is not registered for GST.
2. Applicants must disclose any other grants or funding assistance being received or sought for their research project, and this advice will be considered within the assessment and evaluation process.
3. Seed Research projects must commence within two months from when successful Applicants have received institutional ethics approval, and have a duration limit of one year.
4. Successful Applicants will be required to sign a contract with WorkCover NSW for delivery of services.
5. No legal or other obligation shall arise between Applicants and WorkCover NSW or the NSW Government unless and until a contract has been executed.
6. A fair and equitable agreement as to the rights of respective parties to the intellectual property created as a result of the Seed Research funding will be negotiated with successful Applicants on a case by case basis. However, it is WorkCover's intent that successful Applicants will have the full right to publish any results obtained by them, subject to established safeguards for the protection of privacy or confidentiality of personal data.
7. Applicants must comply with the requirements of the SRWS *Statement of Business Ethics* and must disclose any conflicts of interests in their proposal.
8. If an Applicant, or any of its officers, employees, agents or sub-contractors is found to have:
 - a. offered any inducement or reward to any public servant or employee, agent or subcontractor of WorkCover NSW, or the NSW Government in connection with the submitted proposal;
 - b. committed corrupt conduct in the meaning of the Independent *Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*;
 - c. a record or alleged record of unethical behaviour or not complied with the requirements of the SRWS *Statement of Business Ethics* it may result in the Application not receiving further consideration.
9. WorkCover NSW may, at its discretion, invite Applicants to provide written comments within a specified time before they are excluded on the basis of Condition 8.
10. If WorkCover NSW becomes aware of improper conflicts of interest by a successful Applicant after a contract has been executed, then WorkCover NSW reserves the right to terminate the General Conditions of Contract that has been made under it.
11. WorkCover NSW and the NSW Government reserve the right to cancel, vary, supplement, replace or amend the process set out in this document, any of its terms and any procedures or assessment criteria at any time with notice in writing. To the extent permitted by law, Applicants will have no claim against WorkCover NSW or the NSW Government with respect to the exercise or failure to exercise its rights.
12. In submitting an Application, the Applicant signifies agreement to comply with the Goods and Services Procurement Policy Framework. Failure to comply with the Framework may be taken into account by WorkCover NSW when considering proposals or any subsequent quotation, and may result in the Applicant being passed over.

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13. WorkCover NSW and the NSW Government reserve the right to cancel, vary, supplement, replace or amend the process set out in this document, any of its terms and any procedures or assessment criteria at any time with notice in writing. To the extent permitted by law, Applicants will have no claim against WorkCover NSW or the NSW Government with respect to the exercise or failure to exercise its rights.
 14. All information provided will be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law.
 15. All costs and expenses incurred by Applicants that is in any way associated with the development, preparation and submission of Applications will be borne entirely and exclusively by Applicants.
 16. Funds will be provided to successful Applicants according to a predetermined and agreed payment schedule and upon submission of a progress report and invoice.

2. Developing a proposal

Required content

Research concept

You must provide a description of what the project will do.

You should articulate the aim of the research – clearly define the concept or idea to be tested or explored in relation to a priority area identified by WorkCover NSW. Explain the type of research activity to be undertaken eg literature or desktop review, pilot, proof of concept study, consultation workshop, forum or conference etc.

Background

The rationale for the project should be outlined. Explain why the research is required or what instigated the development of the proposal. You should include an outline of any existing research as well as an explanation of any unusual or specific issues that may impact the undertaking of the project. You should provide justification for why WorkCover should enter into direct negotiations with you to undertake this research.

Timeframe

You must include an outline of the timeframe for completion of the research project, keeping in mind that Seed Research projects have a duration limit of one year and must commence within two months from receiving institutional ethics approval.

Project plan

Information must be provided regarding how the research project will be conducted, such as:

- Objectives
- Planned activities against timeframes
- Risk mitigation strategies
- Evaluation measures
- Reporting
- Deliverables/outputs

You must list the deliverables or outputs of the proposed research – what you will provide to WorkCover at the completion of the research project. WorkCover requires a report on: the research findings; their applicability in the field of workplace health and safety, injury management, or workers compensation; and, how the findings will be disseminated. Additional deliverables may include other materials or resources (for example: conference presentations; journal articles etc).

Project budget

You must provide a project budget that shows:

- The total funds required to undertake the project (excluding GST)
- An indicative breakdown of project budget
- Other funding sources (for example: other project partners; ARC funding etc)

3. Submitting an application

Overview of Application process



Required documentation

Applicants will need to complete and sign the Application Form at Appendix A. All information must be provided for the Application to be considered. Application Forms must be accompanied by:

- A research proposal, containing the information outlined on page 5 of these Guidelines
- A brief profile of the Applicant organisation
- A brief profile of the Applicant's Research Partner, if applicable
- Information on other research projects managed and completed by the Applicant
- Brief CVs of key personnel who will be working on the project.

Email address for submitting Applications

Seed Research applications must be emailed to the following address:

workcover.research@workcover.nsw.gov.au

4. Assessment of applications

Overview of assessment process

- Applications are checked for eligibility and completeness
- A determination is made as to whether proposal is progressed for detailed assessment
- Applications accepted for detailed assessment are evaluated against criteria by Research Assessment Panel (RAP)
- Funding recommendations are progressed to Executive Research Management Committee (ERMC) for endorsement
- Endorsed funding recommendations are submitted to CEO, SRWS for formal approval

Initial Assessment

When funding requests are received outside the published funding rounds or streams, they may be considered provided the following conditions are met:

1. The proposal addresses a demonstrated need for new or improved knowledge in relation to: prevention and/or treatment and/or rehabilitation with respect to workplace illness and injury; and/or, associated scheme viability and legislation
2. The proposal includes the unique elements that provide justification for entering into direct negotiation with the applicant; and
3. The proposal provides adequate information to support an assessment. This would include a clearly defined concept, idea or issue; methodology to be used; indicative timeframe and budget to undertake the research; researchers credentials.

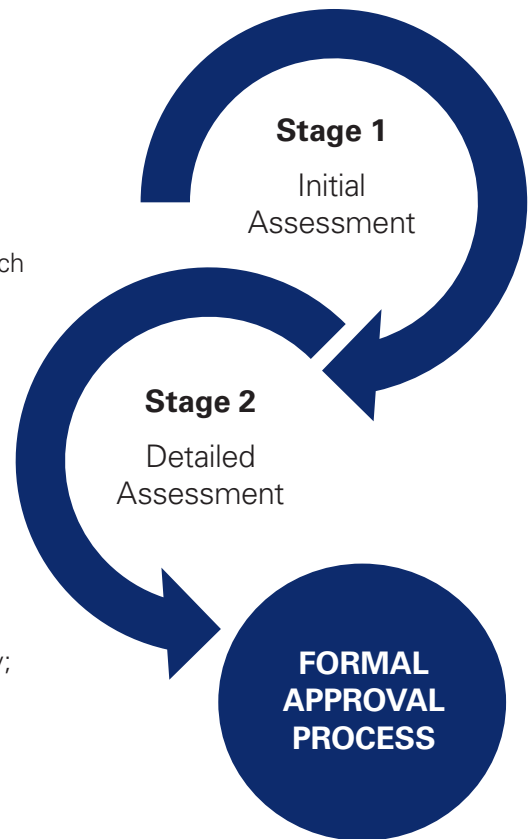
Where proposals do not meet the conditions outlined above, the applicant may be encouraged to resubmit proposals under a published funding round/stream.

If accepted for assessment, applications for funding must be considered against WorkCover's corporate strategy key result areas and identified priority research areas.

Advice regarding the exclusion of an Application, and the rationale for the exclusion, will be communicated to the Applicant at the conclusion of the Initial Assessment, by email in the first instance and then by formal letter.

Research Assessment Panel

Initial assessment of Seed Research proposals is undertaken by WorkCover's Planning Performance and Research Unit, in the Strategy and Performance Division. If the initial assessment is satisfactory, the Application for funding may be progressed to a Research Assessment Panel to undergo detailed assessment. The Research Assessment Panel comprises WorkCover business unit representatives and, if necessary, external subject matter expertise and academic research expertise will be sourced to provide technical review.



Detailed Assessment

Seed Research proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

Relevancy/Need

- The research is aligned to WorkCover's corporate strategy key result areas and current/future states.
- The research is aligned to WorkCover's priority research focus areas.
- The research concept is well-defined and evidence of need has been provided.
- The research will make a useful contribution to the body of knowledge.
- The research will lead to the delivery of significant improvements to the health, safety and welfare and/or return to work outcomes of workers.
- The issue is aligned to long term key performance indicators.

Actionable

- The research is supported by sound methodology.
- The research should deliver timely findings, and lead to meaningful changes in policy or practice within an acceptable timeframe.
- An indicative budget breakdown has been provided.

Impact

- Research Outcomes/Stakeholder Support/Innovation/Cost Effectiveness

Capacity

- Evidence provided to indicate that researchers are able to deliver high quality research outputs

Formal Approval

Seed Research funding recommendations are submitted to the WorkCover Executive Research Management Committee (ERMC) for endorsement and then progressed to the CEO, SRWS for approval.

Applicants will be notified in writing of assessment outcomes.

WorkCover NSW Seed Research Funding: Application Checklist

Before you submit your proposal for Seed Research funding, check that.....	Refer to page #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You are eligible to apply for funding under the Seed Research category of the WorkCover NSW Research Program.	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
You accept and are able to meet the Conditions outlined in these Guidelines.	4–5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your proposal clearly articulates your research concept and demonstrates how your research will address an identified gap or research question in relation to work health and safety, injury management, or workers compensation.	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your proposal provides a clear description of how you will conduct the project within the required timeframes for Seed Research projects.	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the process for submitting an Application.	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have completed all sections of the <i>Application for Seed Research Funding</i> (catalogue no WC01517)		<input type="checkbox"/>
You have collected and scanned the required supporting documentation.	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have noted the correct email address to which the proposal must be submitted.	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
You understand the way in which proposals will be evaluated and how you will be notified of the outcomes of the evaluation process.	8–10	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have noted where to go for further information.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Further information

Organisations needing further information about how to submit an Application for funding to undertake Seed Research under the WorkCover NSW Research Program can contact the WorkCover NSW Planning, Performance and Research Unit.

Attention: Senior Project Officer
Planning, Performance and Research Unit
Strategy and Performance Division
WorkCover NSW
Locked Bag 2906
LISAROW NSW 2252
Ph: 02 4321 5301
Email: workcover.research@workcover.nsw.gov.au

Appendix A

Standard Funding Agreement Clauses – currently under review

Conditions that may be included in contractual arrangements, including but not limited to WorkCover ownership of intellectual property and copyright of reports and products, options for varying, suspending or terminating the project, reporting and communication, confidentiality, indemnity provisions and compliance with applicable laws, are currently under review.

These will be appended to this document once the review is complete.

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