

SYLVIA & CHARLES VIERTEL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



CLINICAL INVESTIGATOR AWARDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I know if I am eligible?

In order to be eligible to apply for these awards you would need to be able to convince the Foundation's Medical Advisory Board that your new role satisfies the program's requirement as your "first definitive clinical position in an academic environment".

2. What is your definition of a Clinical Investigator?

Generally, someone who is a medical graduate or a graduate of another clinical discipline with a definitive clinical appointment of at least 0.2 FTE or higher working across multiple sites including in a University clinical department, a teaching hospital, a clinical research unit in a research institute or in an academic general practice setting. Applicants are required to note their FTE across these multiple sites (i.e. 0.2 FTE clinical appointment and 0.8 research appointment).

3. Do I need to be actively engaged in clinical research?

The Foundation's program is directed towards assisting new investigators to establish their research program. Applicants should be actively engaged in clinical research.

4. Does the researcher need to be involved in a clinical trial?

Applicants for the Viertel Foundation's Clinical Investigator Awards do not need to be engaged in a clinical trial. As long as they meet the eligibility criteria (e.g. have an appropriate clinical appointment and are engaged in research) then they would be eligible to apply for this award.

5. I am currently completing my PhD and will have submitted by the time the awards are notified. I have commenced a clinical position, would I be eligible for a grant?

Applicants must have proof of their PhD conferral date as per academic records from their University at the time of applying.

Eligible applicants will be medical graduates or graduates of other clinical disciplines who have completed both their clinical and research training which will normally be at doctoral level and are commencing their first substantive clinical position or have been in such a post for no more than 36 months on 1 May of the year of application.

6. Can I apply for a Clinical Investigator Award if I am not an Australian citizen or permanent resident?

No. To be eligible for the Viertel Clinical Investigator award you must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

7. Do I need to have employment in place with a research institute prior to applying for the award?

Yes. Part of the application process requires evidence of an agreed (current or potential) employment arrangement with an Australian research institute.

8. What does the selection process entail?

All applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Medical Advisory Board members and they will make recommendations to the Foundation's Trustees.

9. Can I apply again if I have been previously unsuccessful?

Yes, you may re-apply providing that you are still eligible. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply the year following, provided that they have still been no more than 36 months in their position.

10. What if I wish to take parental leave during the award?

Recipients of the award are subject to the employment conditions of their host institution. The Foundation – on the advice of its Advisory Board – will consider requests from the recipient to place their award on hold temporarily where those requests have the support of the recipient's host institution. Parental Leave and periods of major illness are examples of situations where the Foundation will consider requests from the recipient to temporarily put their award on hold.

11. Who needs to certify my application?

Certification requires the organisation to accept certain conditions. Applicants need to follow their organisations internal processes and delegation of authority to sign documents.

12. Are there any deadlines for minimum data in the application process?

There is no minimum data requirement. The application process is a single step process of completing the application form and uploading additional documents by the published application closing date. This includes referee letters.

13. Can I get an extension to submit my referee letters?

There will be no extensions to the closing date. Applicants are encouraged to arrange referee letters early to ensure there is sufficient time for referees to submit letters by the closing date.

14. Can a hospital foundation with DGR-1 status be the grant administering institution for a health service employee?

Yes, as long as there are mechanisms in place to make the funding available to the grant recipient.

15. Can my sponsor institution be a charity?

Registered charities with DGR-1 status and the required tax concessions can be sponsors provided they are an academic institution engaged in research and they have a mechanism to make the funds available to the applicant.

16. Are institutional overheads and salary oncosts allowed to be included in the budget?

Salary support for research personnel other than the applicant can be included in the budget with oncosts (ie Super, Work cover etc up to 25%). Administrative overheads are not permitted. The Foundation takes the same approach as the NHMRC where the grant cannot be used to offset employment related costs that are provided under institution enterprise bargaining agreements over and above the limits permitted by the NHMRC.

17. Can the applicant hold more than one clinical appointment adding up to 0.2FTE?

Applicants can have multiple clinical appointments adding up to 0.2FTE but they must be within a public health service, or relevant academic institution conducting clinical research.

Private practice appointments cannot be counted towards the 0.2FTE clinical appointment requirement.

18. My clinical appointment is for less than 1 year, can I still apply for a clinical investigator grant?

The employer must provide a letter stating the tenure of the appointment which must be for the duration of the grant. I.e. Minimum of one year for the year that the grant is awarded.

19. Does the page limit of the proposal include references?

The proposal must be a maximum of 3 pages including figures. References can be on an additional page but must not be more than 1 page.

20. Are full time clinicians ineligible to apply even if they conduct research in their own time?

Applicants must hold a research position at an appropriate academic institution in addition to their clinical appointment and have the support of their sponsor institution.