

# The Sylvia & Charles Viertel

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## Charitable Foundation

### Clinical Investigator Awards

#### Guidelines for Applicants, Referees and Institutional Sponsors

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**Date: 1 April 2026**

## ***About the Viertel Foundation***

The Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation (the Viertel Foundation) was established by Charles Viertel's Will in 1992. The Will provides for Trustees to administer the Viertel Foundation and specifies the purposes for which the income can be distributed (or granted).

Charles Viertel's Will provides that the Trustees of the Viertel Foundation may at their absolute discretion select and make grants to charitable organisations and for charitable purposes anywhere in Australia. Within the terms of the Will and respecting the wishes documented in the Will, the Trustees have set out guidelines to assist grant seekers.

### **The Trustees**

- Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO (Chair)
- Mr Paul De Silva
- Mr Peter Evans
- Equity Trustees

The Trustees determine the Clinical Investigator Awards in the light of recommendations received from the Viertel Foundation's Medical Advisory Board.

### **The Medical Advisory Board**

- Professor Christina Mitchell AO (Co-Chair)
- Professor Paul Ekert (Co-Chair)
- Professor Jonathan Carapetis AM
- Professor Gemma Figtree AM
- Professor Glenda Halliday AC
- Professor Fabienne Mackay
- Professor Marc Pellegrini
- Professor Jose Polo

## ***About the Clinical Investigator Awards***

Applications are invited for a one-year Clinical Investigator Award valued at \$150,000 to commence in January 2027. The Trustees award at up to three Clinical Investigator Awards each year at their discretion.

Clinical Investigators Awards aim to stimulate and encourage clinical research in Australia. In particular, the Awards are intended to assist new investigators to establish their research programs at the time of the difficult transition from doctoral and post-doctoral training posts to their first definitive clinical positions in an academic environment.

## ***Opening and Closing Dates***

Applications open on **6 April 2026** and close on **30 May 2026** (11:59pm AEST).

## ***Eligibility***

The Clinical Investigator Awards target:

- medical graduates or graduates of other clinical disciplines who have completed both their clinical and research training;
- who have had their doctorate **conferred** at the time of application;
- who are commencing their first definitive clinical position\* of 0.2 FTE or higher (appointment of 1 year or more) or have been in such a post for **no more than 36**

**months** on 30 May of the year of application. The clinical position must be in a university clinical department, a teaching hospital, a clinical research unit in a research institute or in an academic general practice setting;

- who are actively engaged in clinical research and are seeking to establish or further develop a clinical research career\*\*
- who **do not** hold a nationally competitive (e.g. NHMRC) fellowship or investigator grant funding the applicant's salary at 0.5 FTE or greater; and
- who are either an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia, or a New Zealand citizen with a Special Category (subclass 444) visa.

\* A key eligibility criterion for the Awards is that applicants are commencing or in their first definitive clinical position. First definitive clinical position is the applicant's first clinical position following completion of advanced medical specialty or general practice training. Applicants must be working in separate and distinct research and clinical roles. Applicants can have multiple clinical appointments adding up to 0.2 FTE or higher, but they must be within a public health service, or relevant academic institution conducting clinical research. Private practice appointments cannot be counted towards the 0.2 FTE clinical appointment requirement.

\*\* There is no priority given to any particular area of research. The Medical Advisory Board considers applications across the medical research spectrum, including for example from nurses, psychologists, and those working in public health. The Medical Advisory Board considers all eligible applications, with each applicant and application judged on the basis of merit and excellence, in competition with other applications.

Award funds can only be paid to and administered by Australian academic/research institutions that are endorsed as a charity. Hospital foundations with DGR1 status can be the grant administering institution for a health service employee, as long as there are mechanisms in place to make the funds available to the applicant.

Applications where institutional ethics committee approval has been sought or approval obtained will be considered. The applicant's host institution is required to certify that the research governance requirements for the application, such as human research and animal experimentation ethics approvals, will be met for the entire tenure of the grant.

The final completed application must be read by your Head of Department or equivalent prior to its submission. By submitting your application, you are acknowledging that your Head of Department has read your completed application and agrees to the research described in the application being carried out in their department.

There are no limits on the number of applicants per organisation. It is advisable to contact your institution's grants/research office to discuss the application prior to submitting your application, as all applications are in competition with one another.

## ***Selection Process***

The selection process and expected date for announcement are as follows:

1. The secretariat reviews applications for eligibility.
2. The Viertel Foundation's Medical Advisory Board reviews all eligible applications and creates a long list.
3. The long-listed applications are further assessed by the Medical Advisory Board and up to three applicants are recommended.

4. The Trustees of the Viertel Foundation consider Clinical Investigator Award recommendations from the Medical Advisory Board. All applicants are informed of the outcome in the week commencing 14 September 2026.
5. It is expected that the Clinical Investigator Award commences by 31 January of the year following its award. The funding is normally paid by January of the year following its award.

Note that the feedback is not provided to unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in the future if they are still eligible in the year of application (e.g. they have been in their first definitive clinical position no more than 36 months from the closing date of the grant round).

## ***Preparing Your Application***

Applications are prepared and submitted via SmartyGrants:  
<https://equitytrustees.smartygrants.com.au/ViertelCI2026>.

Please ensure all supporting documents follow the naming conventions and the formatting requirements set out in the application form:

- Use Arial 11 pt in all attachments, with margins each side of 2.5 cm and single line spacing.
- All files must be in PDF format (except where Excel, Word or JPG/JPEG format are specified).
- Name your files in this format: <ViertelCI>\_<Applicant's surname>\_<Institution>\_<short content description of file>.pdf  
e.g. ViertelCI\_Smith\_UniSyd\_CV.pdf

General administrative enquiries regarding applications can be addressed to Equity Trustees at [charities@eqt.com.au](mailto:charities@eqt.com.au). Please ensure that you have read the Guidelines carefully before emailing as they address the questions most commonly asked by applicants and research offices.

## ***Budget***

The budget does not have to add up to the award amount (e.g. it may include sources of funding for other aspects of the research proposal). The purpose of the budget is to provide reviewers with a general understanding of how the Award funds are proposed to be applied.

Award funds are to be used for research purposes and not for the applicant's salary. Employee on-costs for any project research staff can be funded from the grant, but only the mandated government costs (e.g. 12% superannuation; long service, annual and personal [sick] leave), as per the NHMRC policy on Salary Support Packages for fellowship and investigator grant salaries. A maximum of 25% on-costs can be paid from the Award funds. Institutional indirect costs cannot be paid from the Clinical Investigator Award funds.

The budget can include work done by collaborators overseas provided such work cannot be conducted in Australia. A justification is required in the budget of the application.

## ***Curriculum Vitae Template***

**Use this template for the Curriculum Vitae section to be uploaded on the Application form.**

**Limit this to 5 pages** and incorporate the following sections:

- A. Details of academic background, including degrees, prizes, distinctions and other special qualifications awarded, stating where and when they were awarded.
- B. Details of current appointment (and proposed, if different from current), indicating size of research group, availability of research infrastructure and any future changes that may impinge upon research opportunities.
- C. Details of previous appointments in chronological order.
- D. Outline your research impact, and your contribution to the reach and significance of this impact to your field (**maximum 8,000 characters**).
- E. Outline your leadership achievements (**maximum 8,000 characters**). This may include your contribution to training, mentoring and supervising students; postgraduate and undergraduate teaching; and, if relevant, industry/commercial activities or clinical duties and the impact of clinical sessions on your research project. With respect to research students indicate whether sole or co-supervision and include information on any completions.
- F. Details of national and international recognition such as invited plenary lecture, peer review involvement (including grant application review for funding bodies, manuscript review), editorial board responsibilities, membership of executive committees or executive positions held, organisation of national and international meetings.
- G. Details of consumer engagement and involvement in the wider community, including raising community awareness of health issues, science education forums etc.
- H. Details of any current and/or past career interruptions and how they have impacted your career. Refer to the Guidelines and template available on the [Equity Trustees website](#) for outlining career interruptions and how they will be factored into assessment.
- I. I. Any further information to support your application.

## **Publications Template**

**Use this template for the Publications section to be uploaded on the Application form.**

1. Provide a paragraph with your H index, total number of publications and total citations. What database is your citation count and Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)/Category Normalized Citation Impact (CNCI) information taken from? What date was it sourced on?
2. Provide a link to your preferred publication profile ID (ORCID, Scopus Author, Google Scholar). **PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO PROVIDE THIS LINK** within the Publications document uploaded.
3. Nominate your best 10 publications in the past 10 years (accounting for career disruptions, **maximum 500 characters for each citation**) using the table below. Explain why these publications have been selected, outlining the quality of the research and contribution to science (**maximum 1,000 characters for each justification**), and your role/contribution to each.
4. Provide a full list of publications – **numbered in chronological order and sorted in these subcategories**: Refereed journal article; Review; Book; Chapter; any other publication; Patents (include status i.e. provisional application, completed application, granted – specify countries). **This list of publications should not exceed 10 pages.**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>FWCI/CNCI</b>
1			
Justification:			
2			
Justification:			
3			
Justification:			
4			
Justification:			
5			
Justification:			
6			
Justification:			
7			
Justification:			
8			
Justification:			
9			
Justification:			
10			
Justification:			

## ***Eligible Career Interruptions and Template***

The Medical Advisory Board will take into consideration exceptional circumstances during the 36-month period between conferral of a researcher's PhD and their eligibility to apply for a Clinical Investigator Award. The Viertel Foundation's approach to this criterion will be assessed based upon each individual's application.

### ***Eligible Career Interruptions***

The following significant, and not overlapping, career interruptions of >90 days can be included and will be taken into consideration in assessing your eligibility to apply for a Clinical Investigator Award.

Note: **Clinical duties and clinical training cannot be claimed as a Career Disruption.** Disruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic also cannot be claimed as a Career Disruption. These and other personal or professional Career Circumstances affecting research productivity (not meeting the eligible Career Disruptions above) are taken into account in track record assessment only. Career Disruptions which meet the eligibility criteria below but are <90 days will be considered as Career Circumstances.

<b>Eligible Career Interruptions</b>	<b>Period of time that can be claimed (must be &gt;90 days)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruption due to international relocation</li></ul>	A period of time commensurate with the interruption, not exceeding 3 months per international relocation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caring responsibilities</li><li>• Disability</li><li>• Disaster management and recovery</li><li>• Medical conditions</li><li>• Parental leave</li></ul>	A period of time commensurate with the interruption.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary carer of a dependent child</li></ul>	Up to 2 years, inclusive of parental leave, for each dependent child. If required, an additional period of time commensurate with the interruption.

### ***Template***

Outline your Career Disruptions and Career Circumstances within section H of your CV in your application. Request a copy of the Career Disruption Calculator Excel template from Equity Trustees ([charities@eqt.com.au](mailto:charities@eqt.com.au)) to determine the days of Career Disruption (only) that apply to your application. Upload this completed file with your application.

## ***Referee Guidelines***

**These guidelines should be forwarded by the applicant to each of their two nominated referees.**

Referee's reports are treated as strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the Viertel Foundation's Medical Advisory Board and the secretariat. There is no restriction on who can be a referee. The applicant should select referees who have scientific experience relevant to the applicant's area of research and can provide the information required as set out in these referee guidelines.

Two referees are invited to submit a report (on their official institutional letterhead) about the applicant and the applicant's research proposal, including comments on, and responses to, the following:

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
2. Does the applicant have the knowledge skills and creativity to pursue the research program that has been proposed?
3. How do you see the applicant's potential and future in Australian academic medicine or medical research?
4. Where would you place the applicant with respect to the relevant peer group?
5. Is there any particular work that has already been done which would make the applicant worthy of this Clinical Investigator Award?
6. What is your assessment of (or your views on) the quality of the research proposal?
7. *Optional:* Are there any current and/or past circumstances that have impacted on the applicant's research career and that are relevant for the Medical Advisory Board to consider?

Referee's reports must be emailed by the referee in PDF format to [charities@egt.com.au](mailto:charities@egt.com.au) by **11.59pm (AEST) on 30 May** (the closing date for the grant round).

Please use the following file naming format:

**ViertelCI\_Candidate Surname\_Candidate Institution\_Referee Surname.pdf**

e.g. ViertelCI\_Smith\_AlfredHealth\_Referee\_Davis.pdf

It is **the responsibility of the applicant** to ensure that both nominated referees have completed and emailed their referee reports to [charities@egt.com.au](mailto:charities@egt.com.au) by the closing date. Applications where one or both reports have not been received by the due date will be considered ineligible.

## ***Head of Department Guidelines***

**These guidelines should be forwarded by the applicant to the head of their department.**

The Clinical Investigator Awards are focussed on assisting new investigators to establish their research program. Applicants should be actively engaged in clinical research. Award funds are to be used for research purposes and not for the applicant's salary.

Applicants must hold a research position at an appropriate academic institution in addition to their clinical appointment and have the support of their host institution. The host institution must provide a letter stating the tenure of the appointment which must be for the duration of the grant e.g. minimum of one year for the year that the grant is awarded.

The Head of the applicant's department is asked to provide the information below, on official letterhead, **maximum of 1 page**:

1. Date the applicant commenced their first definitive clinical position\*, the name of the clinical department and institution, the FTE on appointment (and the current FTE if different), and tenure of appointment;
2. Date the applicant commenced their research position, the name of the department and institution, and the current FTE and tenure of appointment;
3. Does the applicant currently hold a nationally competitive (e.g. NHMRC) fellowship or investigator grant of 0.5 FTE or greater?
4. *Optional*: relevant information concerning the applicant's clinical research activity;
5. *Optional*: any career circumstances that have impacted the applicant's career and that are relevant for the Medical Advisory Board to consider; and
6. A **signed recommendation** for the candidate as an applicant for a Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation Clinical Investigator Award. **By signing this letter you attest that you have read the completed application and support the applicant in carrying out the research described in the application.**

\* First definitive clinical position is the applicant's first clinical position (of 0.2 FTE or higher, and appointment of 1 year or more) following completion of advanced medical specialty or general practice training.