

The Sylvia & Charles Viertel

Charitable Foundation

Senior Medical Research Fellowships

Guidelines for Applicants, Referees and Institutional Sponsors

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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 Fellowship 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 Marc Pellegrini
- Professor Jose Polo
- Professor Fabienne Mackay

About the Senior Medical Research Fellowships

Applications are invited for a five-year Senior Medical Research Fellowship valued at \$275,000 per annum (total \$1,375,000) to commence in 2027. The Trustees award at least two Fellowships each year at their discretion, with at least one Fellowship awarded to a female applicant. Additionally, the Viertel Foundation collaborates with [Bellberry Ltd](#) to offer an extra (1) Fellowship each year. The Bellberry-Viertel Fellowship has the same value and is offered on the same terms as the other two Fellowships.

In addition to the Fellowship grant, the Viertel Foundation and Bellberry Ltd collaborate with the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences (AAHMS) to fund the successful Fellows with access to the 3-year [AAHMS Mentorship](#) program, which provides one-on-one mentoring for outstanding mid-career researchers in the health and medical sciences. Mentees become an associate member of the Academy, providing access to support from their mentors and the broader Academy, and the opportunity to participate in Academy policy and advocacy activities to advance the health and wellbeing of the wider community. The Fellowship awards are formally announced at the AAHMS Gala Dinner.

Opening and Closing Dates

Applications open on **2 February 2026** and close on **31 March 2026** (11:59pm AEST).

Eligibility

The Fellowships target:

- early to mid-career researchers qualified to at least the post-doctoral level (no more than 10 years post-doc, taking into account career disruptions);
- who are outstanding researchers;
- who do not currently hold a senior research or teaching position*;
- who are medically qualified, or PhD graduates of another scientific discipline with recognised post-doctoral achievements;**
- who are seeking to establish a research career in Australia and undertake research in an Australian academic institution; 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 Fellowship is that applicants are full time researchers less than 10 years post-doc. With that range of time post-PhD, the definition of senior can vary between organisations. Applicants must commit to the Fellowship being **their primary role (100% of their time) on commencement and during the tenure of the Fellowship**. A clinical appointment of 0.1-0.2 FTE if relevant to the applicant's research can be included, and under exceptional circumstances up to 0.5FTE may be considered (with justification to be provided in the application). The Fellowships are about capability, achievement, and future potential.

** There is no priority given to any particular area of research. The Medical Advisory Board considers applications across the medical and scientific research spectrum, including from nurses, psychologists, 'basic' scientists, 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.

Australian researchers currently working overseas are encouraged to apply. Note however, that the Fellowship must be undertaken in Australia at an Australian research institution/university for the duration of the Fellowship, and applicants must have an agreed (current or future) employment arrangement with an Australian research institute. No funds from the Fellowship can be expended on relocation.

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 Fellowships are intended to provide both salary and project support for outstanding Australian medical researchers. Applicants cannot hold another full-time salary grant. Please ensure where the applicant's salary is funded by any current grants that you have noted this in your application and agree if successful in being awarded a Viertel Fellowship to uphold the conditions of any concurrent grants held by the Fellow during the grant period. This may include for example the requirement by the NHMRC for Investigator grant holders to rescind the Fellow's salary component of an Investigator grant. Applicants successful in being awarded a Viertel Fellowship who already hold another fellowship, can retain the other fellowship title, with the agreement of that fellowship provider.

The final completed application must be read by your Department Head or equivalent prior to its submission. By submitting your application, you are acknowledging that your Department

Head 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.

Fellowship Conditions

1. Employment of Staff

- The Fellowship grant is awarded on condition that the institutional sponsor administers the grant and that the Viertel Foundation is not responsible for any injury or for the death of any person, or for the loss of or damage to property of whatsoever kind, occasioned by or arising out of the Fellow's own negligence or the negligence of some other person employed by the institutional sponsor, whether funded by the Viertel Foundation or some other source.
- The Viertel Foundation does not act as an employer and will not be responsible for claims under any statute or at common law, nor will it indemnify the institutional sponsor against any claim for compensation or against any other claims for which the institutional sponsor may be responsible.
- The tenure of appointment of the Fellow and any other staff must be confined to the period of the grant and shall not exceed 5 years unless the institutional sponsor wishes to retain the staff beyond the period for its own purposes, and at its own expense.

2. Status

It is an expectation of this grant that the Fellow should be granted the status and responsibilities of at least Level C (Senior Lecturer) in the department in which he or she is employed (if the applicant does not meet this condition, the institutional sponsor must indicate within the application their commitment to grant this status if the applicant is successful in being awarded a Fellowship).

3. Financial Arrangements

Expenditure under this grant must be in accordance with the financial details shown in the formal grant award letter. Funding allocated for the Fellow's salary may not be used for any other purpose.

Payments will be made in two equal half-yearly instalments each paid in advance, to a fixed total of \$275,000 annually, irrespective of award or salary increases, or inflation.

4. Commencement of the Fellowship

It is expected that the Fellowship commences by 31 January of the year following its award. In exceptional circumstances the Fellowship can be delayed up to maximum 5 months on request. If the Fellowship is not commenced by 1 July in the year following its award, the grant will be terminated.

5. Limitations of the Viertel Foundation's Liability

The Viertel Foundation accepts no responsibility, financially or otherwise, for the expenditure (or liabilities arising out of such expenditure) or liabilities arising out of the work, other than those specifically listed in the formal grant award letter and accompanying notes. The control of expenditure to be funded under this grant must be governed by the normal standards and procedures of the institutional sponsor and must be covered by the formal audit arrangements that exist in that host institution.

6. Equipment

Any apparatus provided in this grant is donated to the sponsoring department for the benefit of the Fellow's research.

7. Patents

The Viertel Foundation, as a charitable entity, is under an obligation to ensure that the results of research, which it funds, in part or in whole, are published 'for the public good'. At the same time, it recognises the commercial pressures which are upon research institutions and, therefore, the following grant conditions are intended to pay due note to both of these potentially disparate demands.

All results of research, and the intellectual property rights in such results, in relation to which the Viertel Foundation has made a grant, must be considered for patent protection by the appropriate authority within the institutional sponsor. Publication of the research findings may be delayed until such consideration and if a patent application has been filed until it is published under a patent law. However, no unnecessary delay should be allowed to occur before publication is sought. The Viertel Foundation does not seek to retain ownership of the intellectual property and is happy to vest its share in the Fellow and the institutional sponsor.

8. Transfer of a Grant

The award of a Senior Medical Research Fellowship is made to enable a Fellow to work in a specified department, or section within an institution. The Fellowship will not usually be transferable to another institution. Fellows wishing to move to another institution must obtain permission from the Viertel Foundation to continue the Fellowship.

9. Annual Reports

It is a condition of the grant that the Viertel Foundation receives annual reports, including copies of all publications published on or in press during the reporting period, upon the work for which the grant is awarded by 10 February each year and a final report within two months of the end of the Fellowship. All reports will be reviewed by the Medical Advisory Board.

10. Publications

The Viertel Foundation requires its support to be acknowledged in any publications arising from this work, and a report of such publications is to be included in the annual reports to the Viertel Foundation.

Selection Process

The selection process and expected dates 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. All applicants are advised of the outcome at this stage.
3. The long-listed applications are assessed by experts in the relevant field. The Medical Advisory Board then considers the expert reviews and creates a shortlist of applicants who are invited to participate in the final stage of the selection process.
4. Shortlisted candidates give a short presentation on their work to a Viertel Symposium held in Brisbane on 9 September 2026, and then participate in individual interviews with the Medical Advisory Board on 10 September 2026. Travel expenses are funded by the Viertel Foundation.
5. The Trustees of the Viertel Foundation consider Fellowship recommendations from the Medical Advisory Board. Interviewed candidates are informed of the outcome on the afternoon of 10 September 2026 (embargoed until 23 October 2026).

6. The Fellowships are formally announced at the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences Gala Dinner in Sydney on 22 October 2026. Travel expenses are funded by the Viertel Foundation and Bellberry Ltd.

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.

Preparing Your Application

Applications are prepared and submitted via SmartyGrants:
<https://equitytrustees.smartygrants.com.au/ViertelSMRF2026>.

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 unless JPG/JPEG, Word or ZIP format is specified.
- Name your files in this format: <ViertelSMRF>_<**Applicant's surname**>_<**Institution**>_<**short content description of file**>.pdf
e.g. ViertelSMRF_Smith_UniSyd_CV.pdf

General administrative enquiries regarding applications can be addressed to Equity Trustees at 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

Applications need only to set out the first year's budget.

The Fellowships are intended to provide both salary and project grant support. There are no restrictions on how much can be used for project costs vs salary costs. The primary intention is to support the Fellow, so it is important that they are able to draw an appropriate salary through the Fellowship. After that, whether some or all of the balance of funds is allocated to 'project costs' or to hiring a research assistant or other costs related to their research, is largely left to the discretion of the applicant. The grant 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.

Employee on-costs for the Fellow and 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 salaries. Institutional indirect costs cannot be paid from the Fellowship.

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)
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).

Number	Reference	Citations	FWCI/CNCI
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 ten (10) year period between conferral of a researcher's PhD and their eligibility to apply for a Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship. The Viertel Foundation's approach to this criterion will be assessed based upon each individual's application.

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 Viertel Fellowship.

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

Note: Clinical duties or disruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic 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.

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@egt.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 Fellowship award?
6. What is your assessment of (or your views on) the quality of the research proposal?
7. Please provide questions for the applicant at interview (if the applicant is shortlisted).
8. *Optional:* Are there any current and/or past circumstances that have impacted 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@eqt.com.au by **11.59pm (AEST) on 31 March** (the closing date for the grant round).

Please use the following file naming format:

ViertelSMRF_**Candidate Surname_Candidate Institution_Referee Surname**.pdf

e.g. ViertelSMRF_Smith_WEHI_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@eqt.com.au by the closing date. Applications where one or both reports have not been received by the due date will be considered ineligible.

Institutional Sponsor Guidelines

These guidelines should be forwarded by the applicant to their institutional sponsor.

As the sponsor, the host institution supports and wishes to retain a high-calibre researcher by providing the candidate with employment and undertaking to cover institutional indirect costs and any shortfall in employee oncosts not covered by the Fellowship (employee on-costs for the Fellow and any project research staff can be funded from the Fellowship, 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 salaries).

Fellowship funds can only be paid to Australian academic/research institutions that are endorsed as a charity. It is expected that the institutional sponsor will act as the administering institution for the Fellowship grant.

Institutional sponsors are asked to provide the information below, on official letterhead, **maximum of 2 pages:**

1. A brief description of the department/institution in which the Fellow will work (if successful).
2. *Optional:* any career circumstances that have impacted the applicant's career and that are relevant for the Medical Advisory Board to consider.
3. Any offer of additional salary or project support from the institutional sponsor during or beyond the 5-year Fellowship.
4. A **signed recommendation** for the candidate as an applicant for a Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation Senior Medical Research Fellowship. It is an expectation of this award that the Fellow be granted the status and responsibilities of at least Level C (Senior Lecturer) in the department in which he or she is employed. This signed recommendation must conclude with the following attestation:

I give an undertaking that, conditional only on the Fellow's sustained performance as a researcher:

If [*Applicant Name*] is successful in being awarded a Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship, [*Institution Name*] would be prepared to offer [*him/her*] the position of [*Position Title e.g. to Level C or Level D or other position*] on award of the Fellowship or during the tenure of the Fellowship [*outline timeframe*].

Signed:

Date:

Position:

The Institutional sponsor's letter of recommendation must be uploaded in **PDF format** with the application submitted via SmartyGrants by **31 March 2026**.