

UNSW Faculty of Medicine & Health

Neuroscience, Mental Health & Addiction Research Theme

2025 Collaborative Research Funding: Guidelines and Application Form

**APPLICATIONS DUE:
5pm Thursday 10th October 2024**

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

Enquiries can be directed to:

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Research Development Manager, UNSW Faculty of Medicine & Health
Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme
E: neuro.mentalhealth.addiction@unsw.edu.au

Submitting your Application Form:

Application Form and relevant attachments must be combined into one PDF. When saving, please use the naming convention:

Application_NMHA 2025_Project Leader Surname.pdf (e.g. *Application_NMHA 2025_Smith.pdf*)

Email to neuro.mentalhealth.addiction@unsw.edu.au by 5pm on Thursday 10th October 2024.

1. Introduction and Objectives

- 1.1. Our Vision:** Better Health, Better Lives: Building communities free of the burden of the disorders of the brain.
- 1.2. Our Mission:** To prevent, treat, cure and care for a broad range of neurological, mental health and addictive disorders by building effective networks of engaged communities undertaking collaborative research that translates into real-world solutions and improves the quality of life of those affected by those disorders.

The UNSW Medicine & Health Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme aims to address the burdens imposed by neurological, mental health, and drug and alcohol disorders. It constitutes a network of internationally recognised researchers and clinicians leading in the understanding and treatment of complex clinical conditions with physical, behavioural, mental and social dimensions across the lifespan.

The UNSW Medicine & Health Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme seeks to support the initiation and development of collaborative groups that bring together research, education, and clinical partners to explore innovative strategies towards solving these critical problems.



2. Our Collaborating Partners

Our current Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme collaborating partners are:

- UNSW Sydney, including:
 - Centre for Big Data Research in Health
 - Centre for Health Systems Research
 - Discipline of Psychiatry and Mental Health, including the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA)
 - National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)
 - Rural Clinical School
 - School of Biomedical Sciences
 - School of Clinical Medicine
 - School of Health Sciences
 - School of Optometry and Vision Science
 - School of Population Health
 - UNSW Engineering
 - UNSW Science
- Black Dog Institute (BDI)
- Central and Eastern Primary Health Care Network (CEPHCN)
- Mindgardens Neuroscience Network (UNSW, Black Dog Institute, NeuRA and SESLHD)
- Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA)
- South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), including Prince of Wales Hospital (PoWH), Royal Hospital for Women (RHW), SESLHD Mental Health Services and SESLHD Drug and Alcohol Services
- South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD)
- St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney
- Sydney Children's Hospital Network (SCHN)
- The Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Garvan)
- University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
- Western Sydney University (WSU)



3. Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction

The Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme is led by Theme Principal Professor Michael Farrell (NDARC) and consists of four sub-themes.

Children and Adolescent Wellbeing

- Led by Dr Iain Perkes (UNSW and Sydney Children's Hospital Network) and Professor Valsamma Eapen (UNSW Discipline of Psychiatry & Mental Health and SWSLHD)
- Key areas of focus:
 - suicide prevention
 - prevention, identification and treatment of depression and anxiety
 - substance use and abuse
 - psychobiological risk and resilience in response to early adversity
 - mental health literacy in children and adolescents

Complex and Difficult to Treat Diseases

- Led by Professor Philip Ward, Director, Schizophrenia Research Unit, SWSLHD MHS
- Key areas of focus:
 - schizophrenia and related psychoses
 - bipolar disorder
 - treatment resistant depression
 - trauma related conditions
 - alcohol and drug addictions and their co-morbidities
 - behavioural change in the context of lifestyle and social adversity

Healthy Ageing

- Led by Scientia Professor Henry Brodaty, Co-Director of CHeBA (Discipline of Psychiatry and Mental Health, UNSW)
- Key areas of focus:
 - cognitive ageing (including dementia)
 - prevention and treatment of frailty, immobility and falls
 - pain management in older people
 - mental health and positive ageing
 - biology, prevention, and treatment of delirium
 - stroke prevention and treatments
 - alcohol and prescription opioids in the elderly

Brain Sciences and Translational Neuroscience

- Led by Scientia Professor Bernard Balleine (School of Psychology), Scientia Professor Nigel Lovell (School of Biomedical Engineering, UNSW) and Scientia Professor Gary Housley (School of Biomedical Sciences, UNSW)
- Key areas of focus:
 - the interface of regulation and emotion
 - executive function and decision-making
 - the mind – machine nexus
 - neural coding
 - neural therapeutics
 - neural prosthetics
 - neuromodulation and stimulation strategies



4. Funding

Grants of up to **\$75,000** are available to provide support for strategic projects (reviewed and awarded by a panel including members of the Executive Committee and UNSW) **led by early- to mid-career researchers** that relate to at least one of the sub-themes. Projects need to be approved by the Faculty of Medicine & Health to ensure they are compliant within the current UNSW research environment.

The research projects will be funded by the UNSW Faculty of Medicine & Health, Neuroscience, Mental Health & Addiction Theme and administered by UNSW. All funds will be available for distribution in the second week of January 2025 and need to be spent by close of business December 2025.

Grant funds must be spent for the primary purpose of achieving the objectives of this Seed Funding Scheme and cannot be used for indirect costs. Grants will not be renewed and cannot be extended.

All research projects funded under the scheme will be required to provide information regarding outcomes of the project as required for reporting requests. The Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme reserves the right to choose not to award any seed funding if applications do not meet a minimum quality.

Research projects must have potential to drive further research or clinical outcomes and should endeavour to create collaboration between multiple Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme partners.

5. Eligibility

The Project Leader **must** be an employee at UNSW or at one of the Faculty of Medicine and Health's affiliated Medical Research Institutes:

- Black Dog Institute (BDI)
- Children's Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA)
- The Garvan Institute of Medical Research (Garvan)
- The George Institute for Global Health (TGIGH)
- The Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research
- Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA)
- Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI).

The Project Leader **must** be an **early- to mid-career researcher** (up to ten years post-PhD, relative to opportunity, taking into account career disruptions as defined by the NHMRC, see *Appendix A*) and can only be listed on one application as Project Leader.

The Project Team is limited to a **maximum of five Chief Investigators** (including the Project Leader) **and five Associate Investigators**.

The Project **must** be **strongly aligned to one of the sub-themes and their key areas of focus**. Your application will be assessed relative to the primary sub-theme your project is aligned with.

The Project **must** engage a **minimum of three collaborating partners, inclusive of the CIA's affiliation**. The Project **must** engage **health care professionals, service providers, policy makers, community and/or people with lived experience**.



6. Timeline

- **Funding round opens:** Thursday 29 August 2024.
- **Funding round closes:** Thursday 10 October 2024, 5pm
- **Applicants advised of outcome:** no later than Thursday 19 November 2024
- **Project funding will be available from January and must be expended by December 2025. Projects must also be completed by December 2025.**

Information will be requested from awardees about outcomes of projects as needed for reporting purposes.

7. Application Evaluation

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed and awarded by a panel, including members of the Executive Committee and UNSW. Application eligibility will be determined on the following mandatory criteria:

- Alignment with the UNSW Medicine & Health Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction Theme vision and mission
- Alignment with one of the named sub-themes and key areas of focus
- The Project leader must be affiliated with UNSW
- The Project Leader must be an early- to mid-career researcher
- The Project must engage at least three collaborating partners, inclusive of the CIA's organisation
- The Project must engage health care professionals, service providers, policy makers, community and/or people with lived experience.

Applications will be assessed on the following **criteria**:

- Potential to leverage funding for future projects
- Scientific quality
- Significance of the expected outcomes and/or innovation of the concept
- Team quality and capability – with **early and/or mid-career researcher team leadership**, with maximum of five Chief Investigators
- Engagement across Theme collaborating partners
- Engagement with clinicians and/or service providers if possible
- Potential for translational research and identified outcomes
- Co-design or community involvement as relevant.

8. Submitting an Application

The application form must be used to complete your application. Applications should provide all requested information and not exceed the requested word limits. For Project Leader and each Chief Investigator (up to a **maximum of five Chief Investigators**, including the Project Leader), a two-page CV (maximum) is to be submitted with the application form. Only information provided in the application will form the basis of the review process.

Please combine all documents into one PDF.

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