

Rural Research Capacity Building Program (RRCBP)

Frequently Asked Questions – Managers

The Rural Research Capacity Building Program (RRCBP) is funded and operated by the NSW Health Education and Training Institute (HETI). It is an excellent opportunity for rural clinical staff to gain skills in research.

Q. Who can apply for the RRCBP?

Individuals who live in rural New South Wales and are permanent employees of the Northern NSW, Mid North Coast, Far West, Western, Hunter New England (Maitland and north/west), Murrumbidgee, Southern NSW and Illawarra Shoalhaven (Nowra and south/west) Local Health Districts (LHD) are invited to submit research questions/topics for consideration. Rurally based staff working for NSW Ambulance, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network and NSW Health Pillars are also eligible. Pairs or small research teams will also be considered providing eligibility criteria are met.

Q. How long is the program?

The program runs for two years starting in January 2025. Candidates will finish in at the end of 2026.

Q. What training and support is given to candidates?

All candidates undertake four two-day workshops between January 2025 and March 2026, plus quarterly half-day workshops and weekly one-hour recorded webconferences throughout the two-year program. The workshops are mandatory for program candidates. It is usual for the workplace to approve learning and development leave for the workshops.

Local Health Districts of candidates are funded to assist allocation of time for training and research work. Candidates receive administrative support, biostatistical support and mentoring. HETI RRCBP hosts weekly web conferences on a range of research topics to help support and connect candidates.

Through their training and practice, RRCBP candidates learn how to read and review research, design research projects, collect and analyse research data and prepare research reports and presentations.

Q. What are the outcomes of the program?

Candidates prepare a portfolio of evidence against the program's units of competency. This includes a research report of around 25 pages or manuscript for peer-reviewed journal submission. Graduates present their research at a state, national or international conference. These activities are scheduled into the RRCBP timeline. Graduates have demonstrated a range of enhanced skills that benefit their workplace and career.

Q. How are candidates chosen?

Applications must have manager approval prior to submission. All applications are submitted to LHD/Service Executive Sponsors. Applications are assessed and ranked in terms of preference by a panel consisting of executives or their delegates with strategic, research/research ethics and operational experience.

The ranked applications from each LHD are forwarded to HETI for final selections. Candidates may be contacted where further information is required to determine project suitability for the RRCBP.

Notification of successful candidates includes communication with the candidate, manager, Executive Sponsor and research governance officer.

Q. What are my obligations as a manager?

Candidates in the program are funded to allow dedicated time to their research project. Candidates are encouraged to negotiate in advance with managers to allow time for managers to make suitable arrangements. Managers can also approve learning and development leave for compulsory face-to-face workshops. Managers are expected to allow reasonable use of health service resources (e.g. motor vehicles, computers, stationery) to support the research.

Candidates will require encouragement and support during the program and regular meetings are encouraged to discuss the progress of the project, any issues or challenges, etc. This will help to ensure that problems are dealt with swiftly and will also provide candidates with motivation and an opportunity to discuss their research.

A web conference for managers of successful RRCBP applicants will be conducted in early 2025.

Q. What expenses are covered?

The funding is provided by HETI to LHDs to support candidates throughout the program. The candidate and line manager should jointly determine the best way of using this allocation. You may prefer to arrange blocks of time throughout the year, or a regular allocation each week or fortnight. If the staff member works part time, another option is for them to work extra days and be paid for that over and above their regular hours.

A portion of the funding can also be used to cover extraordinary expenses relating to the research.

Q. How are expenses reimbursed?

HETI will provide a maximum of \$29,430 funding per successful participant to the relevant LHD/Service. Funding will be distributed with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the funds provided in the 2024-25 financial year, $\frac{1}{2}$ in the 2025-26 financial year and the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ in the 2026-27 financial year. The research funds will be transferred once in each financial year via intra-health invoice raised by the LHD/Service research office.

The funding HETI will provide is equivalent to \$450 per day with 9% on-costs, for 60 days over two years. Candidates and managers should consider this level of funding when considering applications to the program.

Q. Who is my LHD/Service contact person?

Managers of successful candidates will be advised of the contact person as part of the notification process. If you wish to make contact and discuss the program prior to the application being submitted, please contact the RRCBP Program Managers (details below) or your LHD/Service contact person.

Q. Where do I get more information?

Please contact the RRCBP Program Managers:

Kerith Duncanson - 0428 848 264 or email: kerith.duncanson@health.nsw.gov.au

David Schmidt - 0447 915 863 or email: david.schmidt@health.nsw.gov.au

Website:

<https://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/courses-and-programs/rural-research-capacity-building-program>

RURAL RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM APPLICATION FLOWCHART

