



Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria PhD Scholarship Guidelines

PhD Scholarship Guidelines

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Guidelines for Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria PhD Scholarships

This document describes the guidelines for the PhD Scholarship Scheme at Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria (AOV). It should be read in conjunction with the [Funding Rules](#) for PhD Scholarships document and the [Application form](#).

1.0 Overview: Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria

The Arthritis Foundation of Victoria was established in 1968 by rheumatologist, Dr Les Koadlow, and since 1992 has incorporated Osteoporosis Victoria. It is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to improve the quality of life of those living with or at risk of developing musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. It supports research which has consumer focused outcomes. It is committed to providing healthcare professionals and consumers including carers with evidence based best practices in managing MSK conditions.

1.1 Description of the Funding Scheme

As part of the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria [Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2015-2019](#), the organisation is offering full time scholarships for a PhD by research project in musculoskeletal (MSK) health.

The objectives of the scheme are:

- i) to support researchers in producing high quality evidence to help individuals with or at risk of developing a MSK condition(s) and
- ii) to translate existing or new evidence in MSK research into practise

The funding is to support the researcher's salary only. It does not cover direct research costs associated with undertaking the work nor any administrative overheads.

Scholarships are awarded through a competitive process to the individual not the supervisor or academic institution. Therefore, it is the individual's responsibility to find an administering and research organisation(s) to support the application. The administering organisation and research organisation may be the same or different. Likewise, it is incumbent on the applicant to organise a PhD supervisor. This can be independently initiated or alternatively, universities or research institutes may already advertise suitable research projects with supervisors.

2.0 Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a PhD scholarship, you must have obtained an Australian Bachelor's Degree with Honours (or equivalent qualification) in a relevant area of study including science, medicine or health related field within the last five years of obtaining that qualification. This period of time includes career breaks and working in other fields or abroad. Applicants who have previously been awarded an AOV scholarship are not eligible, nor are those currently in receipt of other nationally competitive grants that include salary support.

Applicants must also meet the requirements of the university, including all the conditions for admission to the research higher degree program and be nominated by the enrolling school or institute.

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3.0 Level of Funding

AOV offer scholarships above the Australian Postgraduate Award. Individual scholarships will consist of a salary component of \$30,000 per annum¹. Funding support for the research project including consumables, services and travel to conferences and thesis allowance must be obtained either by the applicant as a top-up scholarship or may be offered by the university or industry partner in the case of specific projects.

The scholarship will be administered through the nominated organisation's grants office. AOV will pay the administering organisation on a six monthly basis. The recipient will be paid by the administering organisation on a monthly basis. The first payment of \$2,500 will be made to the recipient upon evidence of enrolment in the PhD program at the university. Payment instalments from AOV are contingent on the candidate providing annual progress reports against the stated milestones of the PhD project.

4.0 Duration

Successful candidates will be awarded funding over a maximum period of three years for full time study. Full time study is defined as a minimum of 40 hours per week working on the research project. Currently, AOV does not offer part time scholarships. The candidature begins from the enrolment date at the university.

5.0 General Requirements

5.1 Applicant Requirements

You must either be an Australian citizen or have permanent residency status. Successful applicants will be required to provide proof of citizenship or residency status within the funding agreement.

5.2 Project Requirements

The Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2015-2019 defines seven key priority areas for investing in research. The scope of each is described on the [AOV website](#). Only project applications aligned with these areas will be considered for funding.

Project proposals must also specify clear aims and outcomes which are realistic and achievable in the three year period, based on the funding, expertise and resources available.

5.3 Administering Organisation Requirements

In order for the application to be eligible, it must be supported by a single administering organisation. The administering organisation may be the same as the research organisation or they may be different. AOV requires the administering organisation to:

- confirm they meet the scheme's funding rule for administering the funding
- ensure that consent to submit the application has been obtained by any other persons on the application including the supervisor(s)
- approve and endorse the proposed research project in the application

¹ AOV will not pay GST on top of the \$30,000 per annum. Whether GST is included in this amount or not will depend on the administering organisation's GST status.

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- have well established policies and procedures to manage research grants
- have policies and procedures in place to ensure ethical and moral scientific conduct
- have in place policies and procedures for supporting students throughout their studies
- have policies and procedures to manage any intellectual property generated during the research.
- execute the funding agreement on behalf of the university to administer the funds

The administering organisation may be situated anywhere in Australia, provided its meets the above requirements.

5.4 Research Organisation Requirements

In order for the application to be eligible, it must be supported by a single research organisation. It may be submitted under the auspice of a hospital, research institute, relevant industry clinic or university. If the research will be performed at different research organisations, a lead organisation must be nominated. The research organisation may be the same as the administering organisation or different. AOV requires the research organisation to:

- provide a safe environment to undertake research
- provide all the necessary facilities and infrastructure to undertake the proposed research project
- provide a high quality of mentoring and supervision of the student
- have in place policies and procedures for ethical and moral scientific conduct
- have in place policies and procedures for supporting students throughout their studies
- approve and endorse the proposed research project in the application

The research organisation may be situated anywhere in Australia, provided its meets the above requirements.

5.5 Supervisory Requirements

Under the [Funding Rules](#) there needs to be a primary supervisor who is appropriately qualified to support the application. Secondary supervisors should be listed in the application, however it is the responsibility of the primary supervisor to provide adequate guidance and support to the applicant throughout the course of the Scholarship. The primary supervisor must be academically affiliated with a university.

AOV has specific criteria to assess the quality of the supervisor and this is also taken into account during the evaluation of applications.

6.0 Application Process

The [application form](#) for the PhD scholarship can be downloaded from our website. Applications will be assessed on selection criteria outlined in [section 7.2](#).

The application form must be electronically completed in full to be considered for review. Electronic signatures are accepted. It must be emailed to research@arthritisvic.org.au by

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5pm on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted unless the AOV Research and Knowledge unit is contacted no less than 24 hours prior to the closing date with extenuating circumstances. The decision to accept a late submission of this nature is at the discretion of the Research and Knowledge Manager.

AOV requires two separate referees in order for the application to be considered complete. The prospective primary supervisor must be one of the referees. The [supervisor report](#) can be downloaded from our website. This report should outline the proposed supervisor's view of the applicant's abilities and capacity to undertake a full time PhD project and more specifically, his or her capability in relation to the proposed project in the application. Supervisors must ensure that they submit a two A4 page CV with their report.

The second referee must be qualified to speak with knowledge about the applicants work during the qualification or work experience most relevant to the research program the applicant intends to undertake and on the applicant's capacity for research. The [referee report](#) can be downloaded from our website.

It is the applicant's responsibility to supply their supervisor and their academic or professional referee with the specified form and allow sufficient time for them to complete it and submit directly to AOV prior to, or on, the specified closing date. Applicants may submit these reports with their application, provided they are in a sealed envelope with the referee's signature across the seal.

Applicants will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their applications within two business working days of lodging it. If you do not receive this notification within the given timeframe, please contact the Research and Knowledge unit immediately. If an error has occurred, provided the applicant can provide evidence of the date it was sent, the organisation will accept the application.

6.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

All of the information provided in funding applications is considered as confidential. It will be handled and stored in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*. Personal information will not be disclosed to any other parties without the expressed permission of the individual to which it relates or where the Act allows.

In submitting a funding application to AOV, the applicant gives permission for the information contained in the document to be used for evaluation and administration purposes. This means the information may be disclosed, but is not limited to, evaluation panel members, additional reviewers requested by the evaluation panel, employees of AOV, members of the AOV Board and other personnel of other research funding bodies. In addition, applicants also consent to the information being used in public domain once a scholarship has been funded.

Any questions regarding the form or process may be directed to the Research and Knowledge unit on 03 8531 8000 or at research@arthritisvic.org.au.

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7.0 Assessment and Selection Process

All applications are initially assessed by AOV Research and Knowledge unit staff to ensure that they are complete. If the information is incomplete, the applicant will be contacted either by phone or email and invited to clarify or provide additional information within five business days in order for the application to be considered for review.

Applications will be assessed by an independent review panel of leading professionals in the field. The panel will consist primarily of academics however clinicians, policy makers and consumers may also be involved.

The evaluation panel are provided with guidelines to assess the applications and given four weeks to complete the review process. The panel will:

- rank applications according to the selection criteria in [section 7.2](#) of this document
- provide recommendations to the AOV Research and Knowledge Manager and CEO on applications which adhere to funding guidelines

Panel members will score applications and discuss results in a teleconference chaired by an AOV Research and Knowledge unit staff member to reach a consensus. The panel recommendations are provided to the Research and Knowledge Manager and the CEO for a final decision. The decision to fund is completely at the discretion of Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria.

7.1 Conflicts of Interest

Members of the evaluation panel must conduct themselves in an ethical manner which involves declaring any conflicts of interest in relation to funding applications being reviewed. In cases where conflicts are declared, the individual will not participate in the assessment of that application(s).

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7.2 Selection Criteria for Evaluation Panel

	Criteria	Weighting
1	<p><i>Alignment with AOV Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2015-2019</i></p> <p>The research must align with one of the key priority areas in the Strategy. It must be explicit as to how the research will benefit people living with, or at risk of developing, a musculoskeletal condition. Other aspects of alignment for consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the length of time to translate research findings into the clinic and or community • plan to translate and ease of translation • how the results of the research will be communicated to relevant stakeholders, including clinicians, allied healthcare professionals, consumers, educators, advocates, policy makers etc. 	30
2	<p><i>Impact of project</i></p> <p>The significance of the project for people living with, or at risk of developing, a musculoskeletal condition will be assessed based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of people who will be influenced or affected by the research • the diversity of the stakeholders influenced or affected by the research • the degree to which people will be influenced and affected by the research • the level of importance of the research relevant to the sector's needs 	10
3	<p><i>Quality of the research</i></p> <p>This aspect assesses the quality of the scientific proposal including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the feasibility of the project • rationale behind the proposal • validity of the project methodology • whether it is achievable in the given timeframes 	30
4	<p><i>Resources</i></p> <p>This aspect considers the research environment in which the research will be undertaken and assesses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature of the existing infrastructure to support the work • whether the work is realistic given the resources and expertise available • mentoring and supervisory capacity within the environment • opportunity to collaborate where appropriate 	10
5	<p><i>Quality of the applicant and supervisor</i></p> <p>The quality of the applicant will be assessed on their academic records and supervisor and referee reports. Likewise, the quality of the supervisor will be considered based on his or her academic track record.</p>	20

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8.0 Outcomes of the Assessment and Selection Process

All applicants will be notified via email or post of the outcome of their application. This will occur within 12 weeks of the closing date for the funding round.

Successful applicants will receive a funding offer via email and post. The scholarship must be formally accepted by the applicant via email or post within two weeks of the date of the offer. It also must be approved in writing by the administering organisation.

In order to receive the funding, successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria through the nominated administering organisation. Information regarding the funding administration and reporting requirements can be found in [appendix 2](#).

Once funding agreements have been executed by all parties (AOV, the recipient and administering organisation) the results of the funding round will be publicly announced.

Verbal feedback on applications will be available upon request, however no written feedback will be provided.

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Appendix 1: Relevant Definitions and Acronyms

Administering Organisation	The organisation which is responsible for managing the project administration and scholarship funds
AOV	Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria
Applicant	The researcher who lodges the completed application form to request funding for a proposed project from Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria. This individual is responsible for gaining all named organisations and persons' consent and certification prior to submitting the form.
Candidate	Refers to the student undertaking the program of research.
Collaborators	Other researchers in different organisations or institutes who are working with the applicant on a research project with a common goal
Consumer	An individual who either has a particular medical condition him or herself or cares for and supports someone who does
Grants Officer	The nominated individual who is responsible for receiving and distributing scholarship funds from Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria
GST	Goods and Services Tax
IP	Intellectual Property
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Primary Supervisor	The senior researcher who is academically affiliated with a university and suitably qualified in the research field. This individual is responsible for mentoring and supervising the applicant to undertake the proposed research project. This person takes a leading role and is the primary contact
Research Organisation	The facility at which the majority of the proposed research project is undertaken
Scholarship	A payment made to support a student's education that is awarded on the basis of academic or other performance
Secondary Supervisor	The senior researcher who is academically affiliated with a university and suitably qualified in the research field. This individual also supports the applicant to undertake the work but is a secondary contact

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Appendix 2: Administration Requirements of Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria's PhD Scholarship Scheme

1.0 The applicant will be responsible for leading and managing the research throughout the course of the scholarship. This includes ethics approval, correspondence between researchers and the supervisor, paperwork associated with the PhD candidature and coordinating the scholarship reporting requirements with the administering organisation and AOV.

2.0 The administering organisation will be responsible for the administration of the project and the scholarship funds as outlined in the funding agreement. The organisation must also notify AOV of its GST status.

3.0 Successful applicants will be required to report on the progress of the research project every six months from the receipt of the funds using the AOV [reporting template](#). The reports will be used to determine if the project is tracking satisfactorily against the agreed milestones in the application and if funds are being used as per the approved project. In accordance with the funding agreement, if the reports are not submitted, completed to a satisfactory standard or funds are not being used appropriately, AOV can suspend funding until such time at these requirements are met.

4.0 The applicant will also be responsible for acknowledging funding support from AOV on each occasion that the research is publicly announced, discussed or presented regardless of the format or communication channel. This includes but is not limited to scientific conferences, forums, radio or TV interviews, journals, newspaper or magazine articles and social media. AOV will provide logos and other promotional material upon request for this purpose. The successful applicant should also identify themselves on all communications as an "Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria PhD Scholar".

5.0 Any intellectual property which is generated during the course of the research will be assigned and managed according to the administering organisation's policies and procedures. AOV does request that it is commercialised such that those living with or at risk of developing a musculoskeletal condition have fair and reasonable access to it. Refer to the [Funding Rules](#) for more information on IP.

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