



NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme Call Specific Guidance for Applicants

1. General Description

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) are pleased to invite proposals to the NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme.

This Grant Opportunity will provide funding for up to three (3) collaborative research projects that focus on the causes, prevention, cure and/or treatment of dementia.

The Grant Scheme is open to early career researchers as the lead Chief Investigator/Principal Investigator, supported by established researchers wishing to apply their knowledge and expertise to the collaborative project.

In total, NHMRC will make up to \$1.5 million AUD available (capped maximum value of \$500,000 AUD per grant) in support of the Australian researcher team and activities; with 30 million JPY per year up to three (3) years (capped maximum value of 10 million JPY/year per grant) funding provided by AMED in support of the Japanese researcher team and activities.

Background

NHMRC and AMED signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in October 2018. NHMRC is working with AMED to advance the development of research cooperation in health and medical research between Japan and Australia scientists by means of cooperative research projects.

In order to advance the health of people in Australia, Japan and internationally, it is timely for scientists of these two countries to work together to address one of our most pressing health challenges, dementia. With increasingly ageing populations in both Australia and Japan the incidence of dementia is becoming more frequent. Dementia as a disease is commonly associated with memory loss, but can affect speech, cognition, behaviour and mobility. An individual's personality may also change, and health and functional ability decline as the condition progresses.

As our respective populations age, we will reach the point where many of us will either be diagnosed with dementia, or become a carer and/or family member of someone with dementia at some time in our life. Some of us will be all three. It is estimated that in 2020 more than four hundred thousand people in Australia¹ and more than 6 million people over 64 years old in Japan² are living with dementia making it one of the most significant health

¹ [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Dementia Snapshot Report 23 July 2020. www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/dementia](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/dementia)

² Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (kantei.go.jp): https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ninchisho_kaiqi/yusikisha_dai2/siryou1.pdf



concerns for older Australians and Japanese. The need for targeted, coordinated and collaborative research in this field has never been more pressing.

Currently there is no cure, but there is great hope for one. A worldwide effort is bringing us closer to a number of advancements such as simple, non-invasive screening tests that will lead to early identification of risk, accurate and timely diagnosis, earlier and more effective interventions, and better care.

The NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme, invites applications that look to further understand the many potential causes of dementia, modifiable lifestyle risk and protective factors that may prevent or delay the onset of dementia. Applications may consider the use of state-of-art, evidence based practices in search for a cure and with a patient centred focus improve the quality of life for individuals living with dementia.

NHMRC

Consistent with its [International Engagement Strategy](#), NHMRC will provide funding for Australian components of successful research proposals. The strategy supports collaborative approaches to health and medical research, including:

- Connecting, supporting and encouraging links with researchers in health and non-health related disciplines
- Supporting a full breadth of health and medical research through international research partners, and
- Engaging in collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches to solving health problems.

Additionally, the NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme builds on the Australian Government's \$200 million [Boosting Dementia Research Initiative](#) that funded 156 projects between 2014 and 2019.

AMED

AMED will support the Japanese components of the collaborative projects between AMED and NHMRC through the Strategic International Collaborative Research Program (SICORP). This program provides support for international joint research projects on the basis of equal partnership in countries, regions, and fields of cooperation that have been designated as particularly important by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) on the basis of intergovernmental agreements, in collaboration with funding agencies in the countries concerned.

To accomplish the research and development objectives mutually agreed upon by both countries, AMED will assign a Program Supervisor (PS) and a Program Officer (PO), who play a key role in advising and management of projects on the Japanese side.

Aim

Through the NHMRC-AMED Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme, NHMRC and AMED aim to:

- Support world-leading collaborative research teams, led by early career researchers that focus on causes, prevention, cure and/or treatment of dementia.
- Enhance existing partnerships and develop new partnerships between Australia and Japan in the area of dementia research.
- Strengthen the strategic medical research relationship between Australia and Japan.

Objectives and scope

The objective is to deliver research funding for internationally competitive and innovative collaborations between early career researchers and established researchers from Australia and Japan in the field of dementia research.

This Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme will fund and support high quality, high impact research that produce genuine, positive short and long-term outcomes for people in the areas of cause, prevention and/or cure of dementia.

Dementia research applications which focus on one or more of the following areas are highly encouraged:

- Improving dementia prevention, assessment, diagnosis and treatment, for example through
 - More precise understanding of major modifiable risk factors for various dementia types
 - Greater understanding of how genetics, interventions and environmental exposure interact with one another to increase vulnerability
 - Development of non-invasive diagnostic approaches
 - Development of rapid and accessible screening tools
- Identification of new targets, technologies and drug candidates, for example by
 - Identifying the separate and shared characteristics of neurodegenerative diseases
 - Understanding and targeting fundamental biological pathways
 - Identifying new ways to intervene in the disease process
 - Pioneer new therapeutic interventions

Alternative project proposals directly addressing the causes, prevention, cure and/or treatment of dementia will also be considered.

2. Prospective Applicants

NHMRC and AMED invite researchers based in Australia and Japan to submit proposals for this call pertaining to Dementia Research. This call for collaborative proposals will require a set of applicants (co-applicants) who will be serving as co-Chief Investigators (CI) based in Australia and Japan to work in partnership on research projects. Australia-

based applicants will be funded by NHMRC while Japan-based applicants will be funded by AMED. Eligibility to apply will be determined by respective national eligibility rules, as follows.

2-1. Eligibility for Australia-based co-applicants:

Chief Investigator A (CIA) must be an Early Career Researcher (ECR) equivalent to either the Investigator Grant Scheme Emerging Leadership Level 1 or Emerging Leadership Level 2.

NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity policy may be applied to determining an applicant's eligibility as an ECR.

Refer to Section 4 Eligibility Criteria and Appendix B of the *NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme grant guidelines*.

2-2. Eligibility for Japan-based co-applicants:

a. The Japan-based co-applicants must be early career researchers who will be the co-Chief Investigators (CI) based in Japan for the project. For the definition of early career researchers of Japan-based co-applicants, refer to the supplemental guidelines for Japan-based applicants (日本側研究者向け補足応募注意事項).

b. The Japan-based co-applicants must be affiliated with a domestic Japanese research institution, and conduct research there. Domestic research institutions on the Japanese side refer to universities, independent administrative institutions, national/public testing and research institutions, specially authorized corporations, public-service corporations, and enterprises, etc. that must satisfy predetermined requirements specified by the MEXT in Japan.

- Any individual who satisfies any of the following conditions is also eligible to apply as Japan-based CI.
 - i. Researcher holding citizenship other than Japanese who belongs to a Japanese domestic research institution.
 - ii. Researcher who is not currently affiliated with a particular research institution, but who will be affiliated with a Japanese domestic research institution and able to conduct research there if selected as Japan-based CI.
 - iii. Japanese researchers currently residing outside of Japan who will be affiliated with a Japanese domestic research institution and able to conduct research there if selected as Japan-based CI.
- Japan-based CI must be able to take responsibility for the duties of the entire project for the full duration of the joint research project.
- Japan-based researchers from industry are eligible to participate in the joint research project in the Japan-based team.

3. Financial Support

In this collaborative research scheme, NHMRC and AMED will jointly fund up to three (3) proposals. NHMRC will provide support for researchers based in Australia, and AMED will support researchers based in Japan. The duration of a collaborative research project shall be no longer than three (3) years in total from the start date.

3-1. NHMRC

Budget for Collaborative Research Projects

The provisional funding allocation for this call is \$1.5 million AUD, with individual projects capped at \$500,000 Australian applicants to refer to Section 3 of the *NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme grant guidelines*.

3-2. AMED

Budget for Collaborative Research Projects

The total budget for each project proposed by Japan-based co-applicants should not exceed 30 million JPY including overhead expenses (indirect costs). The planned budget for research projects may vary each year, depending on the planned activities specific to each project.

Funding for Japan-based Teams are allowable for:

	Items	Standard definitions
Direct Expenses	Facilities, equipment and consumables	Costs for purchasing new equipment, supplies, trial pieces, software, books, reagents, materials, and consumables.
	Travel	Expenses for travel by the CI or research unit members or by invited researchers.
	Personnel and Services	Annual salaries for a PhD student, or post-doctoral fellow or Japan-based researchers including CI* ¹ etc. employed for R&D objectives and honorariums, etc. for speakers of organised symposiums, seminars, and meetings, etc.

	Other	<p>In addition to the above, costs required to accomplish the R&D objectives.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Costs related to the presentation of research results (research paper submission fees, printing costs, HP-producing costs etc.), meeting expenses, transportation costs, equipment lease expenses, equipment repair costs, printing costs, software subcontract production costs, inspection costs, equivalent expenses to consumption tax regarding non-taxed transactions, etc.</p>
Overhead Expenses* ²	Allocated in certain proportion to direct expenses (within 30%), paid by AMED as required costs for managing the research institution to implement the contract research and development project and used by the institution.	

*1 For more details about salary for Japan-based CI and buyout cost, please visit the following website: https://www.amed.go.jp/keiri/youshiki_itaku.html (in Japanese only)

*2 Provided for the contract research and development agreement between AMED and a national university corporation, inter-university research institute corporation, national institute for education policy research, independent administrative agency, government-affiliated corporation, special private lending corporation, general incorporated association, general incorporation foundation, public interest incorporated association, public interest incorporated foundation, private enterprise, private university or similar organization, but not for researchers belonging to national institutes. Overhead expenses are also allocated in proportion to the direct expenses to the joint institution (excluding national institutes.)

Contract between Japan-based co-applicant and AMED

Support will be implemented in accordance with a contract for commissioned research which shall be entered into between AMED and the Japan-based co-applicant's Institution. The contract for commissioned research will be signed each fiscal year over the collaborative research period. Since the contract is agreed on condition that all administrative procedures related to the project in question shall be handled within the institution, the CI should consult with the department in charge at his/her institution.

4. Application

4-1. Submission

All applications are to be submitted written in English.

Australia-based applicants must electronically submit their application forms using Sapphire (unless otherwise advised by NHMRC) by 17.00 AEST Wednesday 22 June 2022. Australia-based applicants should also note that minimum data is due to be entered into Sapphire by 17.00 AEST on Wednesday 8 June 2022. Further information is available at Section 7 of the *NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme grant guidelines*.

The Japan-based applicants must submit the AMED-specified application forms (a common research proposal and a supplemental application form) through [the e-Rad application system](#) no later than 17:00 Japan Standard Time on **22 June 2022**. A supplemental application form must be written in Japanese.

4-2. Common Grant Proposal

The co-applicants from Australia and Japan shall work together to write a common research proposal and apply electronically as designated in 4-1.

Evaluation of Project Proposals

A Joint Review Committee consisting of experts will evaluate all proposals. Based on the results of the evaluation, NHMRC and AMED will jointly make a common decision regarding funding of the selected proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria, each weighted at 25 per cent, will apply to each application:

1) Scientific merit and feasibility

The rationale, aims, objectives and (where appropriate) hypotheses for the proposed research must be relevant to the scope of the call. It should articulate how the research will contribute to the evidence base for health in Australia and/or Japan.

2) Expertise of the research team

The research leaders in both countries shall have relevant academic qualifications and topic based knowledge and experience to undertake the proposed research. Teams should have senior members with national and international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application. The early career researcher leaders must be strong contributors to the overall team quality and capability

3) Quality of the research partnership

The collaborative partnership should provide a research contribution with the potential to significantly advance the chosen field further. It should also demonstrate that the team will utilise expertise between members of the research partnership and effectively promote comprehensive working collaborations and intellectual exchange between Australia and Japan as well as increase the transfer of new knowledge and/or

technologies and build Australian and Japanese research capacity to address dementia research priorities. The partnership team should feature diversity of gender and experience and present opportunities for capability building of researchers for early career researchers involved in the project

4) Design and Methods

Successful project completion must be feasible and the study design able to achieve objectives within stated timeframe and budget. The study design and methods should facilitate shared work based on common interests that can only be achieved through bilateral cooperation and engagement. The proposal should define timeframes for achieving results and address risks and their management, where appropriate.

Announcement of Funding Decision

Funding decisions are expected to be made by December 2022 with a joint announcement by the end of December 2022. The tentative start date for projects is January 2023.

Responsibilities of awarded researchers

After the proposal has been approved, research leaders and their affiliated institutions will observe the following when carrying out the collaborative research and utilising funds provided by NHMRC and AMED.

1. Annual Progress Report

All NHMRC reporting requirements are outlined in Section 12 of the *NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme grant guidelines*.

At the end of each fiscal year for AMED-funded projects, the respective research leader should promptly submit a progress report within two (2) months after the end of the fiscal year (for AMED-funded projects), and the institution with which the research leader is affiliated shall promptly submit a financial report to AMED.

2. Final Report

Final reports should be submitted within three (3) months to NHMRC and AMED respectively after completion of the period of international collaborative research. The report includes a general summary (the report format will be notified until the completion of the project) compiled jointly by both the Australia and the Japan research groups.

If papers describing results of collaborative research will be published to academic journals, societies and so on, the copies must be attached to the final report.

3. Participation in a future NHMRC-AMED Joint Workshop/Seminar/Symposium

Research leaders will be encouraged to jointly present their work at the NHMRC-AMED Joint Workshop/Seminar/Symposium when applicable. Respective leaders will be notified by NHMRC and AMED when the joint event takes place. The joint event will be held either in Australia, Japan, or online.

Additional Information and Requirements for Researchers

Please see the annex sheets for such requirements:

NHMRC applicants will need to refer to the *NHMRC-AMED 2022 Dementia Collaborative Research Scheme grant guidelines* for all scheme related information, available on Grant Connect.

日本側研究者向け補足応募注意事項 (Supplemental guidelines for Japan-based applicants)

日本側追加応募様式 (Supplemental application form for Japan-based applicants)

Contact Information

Australia-based co-applicants requiring further assistance are to direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:

Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au

NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13:00 ACT local time on 22 June 2022.

Japan-based co-applicants should contact the following for further information:

Dr Naoko Kojima

Office of International Collaboration, Division of International Strategy

Department of International Strategy

The Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED)

Tel: +81 (0)3 6870 2216

sicorp@amed.go.jp