

Retina Australia

Research Grants Program



FUNDING GUIDELINES AND CONDITIONS

Retina Australia

Retina Australia is a national, charitable organisation dedicated to supporting people affected by inherited retinal diseases. As an independent organisation, Retina Australia funds and facilitates the top medical research into inherited retinal diseases through an annual competitive grants' selection process of the best researchers from all the medical research institutions in the country. Since 1983, we have invested over \$6.4 million across more than 150 projects.

Research Grants Program Application Eligibility

1. Research focus

Retina Australia's research grants are focused on accelerating medical research into inherited retinal diseases in the following areas:

- detection
- prevention
- advancing better treatments
- cures

Priority will be given to studies of inherited retinal diseases and, to the extent that available funds permit, to age-related macular degeneration.

2. Who can apply

- Researchers with at least a PhD or Master's Degree from an Australian university or one recognised by the Medical Board of Australia, may apply for funding.
- Retina Australia will also consider funding overseas research when deemed appropriate by the Grants Advisory Committee. Normally this research would be led by an Australian researcher working overseas and funded according to the same competitive basis as for Australian grants.
- A researcher may only apply once as the Chief Investigator each funding round.
- A researcher may be named as a co-investigator on up to two applications each funding round only. Therefore any application which names a co-investigator who has applied more than two times in one grant round may deem it ineligible.

3. Funding amount and project term

- Researchers can apply for funding up to \$60,000.
- Grants are for 1 year only, from January to December for the year following the application.
- A grant may be sought to part-fund a project. Retina Australia may also choose to part-fund a project.

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4. Key dates

- Mid April – The Retina Australia Research Grants Program opens.
- 30 June – The Retina Australia Research Grants Program closes. All applications must be received by 5pm (AEST).
- November – Grant applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application.

5. Grant Application Process

- Applications for grant funding are to be made by completing the Retina Australia Grant Application Form.
- This Form is to be emailed to the Company Secretary at admin1@retinaaustralia.com.au before the close of the program at 5pm AEST 30 June.
- Applications received after this time will be deemed ineligible for funding.

6. Research Grants Program Review Process

- Applications will be peer-assessed and ranked by Retina Australia's Grants Advisory Committee.
- There are 5 key criteria for assessment. These are:
 - (i) Alignment with Retina Australia's objectives – how the research aligns with Retina Australia's Vision, Mission, Strategic pillars and goals.
 - (ii) Scientific merit – the novelty, significance and validity of the research into inherited retinal disease
 - (iii) Potential impact of the research – how the research might lead to real-world applications, clinical trials, or directly benefits patients with inherited retinal conditions
 - (iv) Researcher's qualifications and track record – experience and past achievements of the researcher, and their project team (where applicable), in the field of inherited retinal disease research or related areas.
 - (v) Quality, clarity and viability of the application – assessment of the composition, clarity and overall quality of the application, including the appropriateness, and efficiency of the proposed budget and the realism and practicality of the timelines included for project completion.
- Ranking recommendations along with associated reports from the Committee will be considered by the Retina Australia Board along with funds available in determining the grants to be awarded each round.
- Retina Australia funding decisions are final. Correspondence regarding the funding outcome for unfunded grants will not be entered into.

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7. Grant Conditions

The following conditions apply to all recipients of a Retina Australia research grant, confirmed by a signed letter of acceptance:

7.1 Grantees must comply with the ethical standards of their institution and all relevant legislation and accepted codes of practice for animal and human experimentation. Confirmation of ethical approval for the project will be required on acceptance of the grant.

7.2 A high resolution photo of the researcher must be provided to Retina Australia on grant acceptance, for communications purposes including placement on the Retina Australia website.

7.3 Information provided in the grant application will be available to Retina Australia for use in its fundraising activities and stakeholder communications.

7.4 All funds shall be used solely and exclusively for the purpose of the work proposed in the successful application during the calendar year and within the terms of the grant.

7.5 Expenditure of funds for any other purpose requires specific prior written permission from Retina Australia.

7.6 The award of a grant is subject to agreement that no part of funds granted by Retina Australia as a charitable entity shall be applied as an infrastructure or other university levy.

7.7 Expenditure of more than \$2,000 on non-consumable equipment items during the course of the grant will not be approved.

7.8 A full account of grant monies expended shall be supplied to the Company Secretary of Retina Australia by 31 March in the year following the grant. This should be delivered in the form of a Financial Acquittal Report signed by the CEO, Senior Finance Manager or equivalent, of the research institution.

7.9 The support of Retina Australia must be acknowledged in all publications and presentations of work funded wholly or in part by a Retina Australia grant.

7.10 Grantees shall complete the Retina Australia Grants Program Acquittal Report and also provide a summary project report on the year's work. This project report should comprise one to two pages of text in non-technical terms, which can be published by Retina Australia in its newsletters, Retina Australia website, or by any other medium. These reports are required to be sent to the Company Secretary by 31 March in the year following the grant, along with the Financial Acquittal Report.

7.11 Retina Australia expects the early and full sharing of data between research groups receiving its funding support.

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7.12 With respect to intellectual property rights the following shall apply: (a) intellectual property produced by the researcher remains the property of the research institution. (b) should the researcher file for a patent or enter into commercial development based wholly, or in part, on research wholly or partially funded by Retina Australia, then the researcher will enter into negotiations with Retina Australia to determine what is a fair and reasonable proportion of the profits to be paid to Retina Australia in recognition of its contribution in funding the research.

7.13 Unless excused by Retina Australia, grantees will attend Retina Australia's National Congress, or participate in an Australia-wide Retina Australia led webinar, for the purpose of presenting a report on their research. However, Retina Australia will not provide separate funding for this purpose.

7.14 Grantees are expected to be prepared to attend and present about their project at, at least one meeting in person during the year of their grant or the year following completion of their research grant, if so requested by Retina Australia.

7.15 Failure to comply with any of the above grant conditions may deem a researcher ineligible for future funding.

8. Grant acceptance and payments

- Successful applicants will be notified by the end of November and sent a Grant Acceptance Form to confirm their grant acceptance, with the associated Grant Conditions as outlined in section 7 above.
- Grants, except for those with explicit timelines, will generally be paid in quarterly instalments, on the fifteenth day of January, April, July and October of the year of the grant, following receipt of written acceptance of the offer and conditions of the grant, and upon receipt of a tax invoice from the awarded research institution.