

ARC Medical Research Policy

UoM Guide

This document is a UoM resource, for applicants applying through the University of Melbourne as the administering organisation. Please do not share with colleagues external to the University.



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ARC Medical Research Policy (MRP)

[ARC Medical Research Policy \(v2025.1, released on 25/07/2025\)](#)

The updated ARC Medical Research Policy, published July 2025, applies to all NCGP schemes and provides clearer guidance on eligibility. The NCGP funds pure basic, strategic basic and applied research in all disciplines **except medical research**. The intended aim of the policy is to reduce the likelihood of applicants preparing and submitting applications to the ARC which are ineligible for funding. Applicants must review the policy for **definitions** of “medical research”, “diseases”, “therapeutic goods” and “interventional” as well as what qualifies as **eligible** and/or **ineligible** research.

ARC MRP Eligibility Process overview

Applications are scanned for medical terms (for example “disease”, “drug”, “intervention”) in the title, application summary and FOR codes; if the scan score exceeds a threshold the application is flagged for Medical Research Policy (MRP) consideration.

Applications can also be flagged by ARC assessors. Flagged applications are referred to the ARC Eligibility Committee, which may seek technical advice from the Medical Research Advisory Group (MRAG). MRAG reviews the submission, cites supporting text from the application and votes on eligibility; the ARC Eligibility Committee then makes the final decision based on MRAG’s advice.

Key Tips

- **Scope of Benefit:** The applications’ sole benefit even if it is outside the scope of the project cannot be a medical application. Applications impact and benefit must be primarily creating new knowledge in non-medical aspects. Benefits in animal health are eligible for ARC funding.
- **Avoid Medical terms:** Avoid using medical terminologies in the Application title, Application summary and FOR codes. We understand that FOR codes cannot be changed in most cases. In case you believe you are using a FOR code that may be flagged for MRP issues, you must include a medical research statement at F2 justifying why your proposal is eligible.
- **Keep disease framing out of fundamental biology proposals:** If your project studies basic biology (even if the pathways are relevant to disease), avoid citing disease statistics or describing population health impacts. Emphasise non-medical impacts only (for example, generation of new knowledge, training of early career researchers).
- **Medical Research Statement F2:** Do not plainly quote the MRP policy for eligibility. A strong case must be made here on why your application is eligible. If you believe there are future medical applications outside the scope of the project, you must clarify that the ARC funding will be used only for fundamental non-medical research and that any future medical applications would be funded through other sources.

- **Rejoinder and Detailed Assessor (DA) comments:** DAs must not provide comments on eligibility in the rejoinder. If a DA comments on eligibility, contact RIC (RIC-ARCgrants@unimelb.edu.au) so we can request ARC to remove that comment.
- **Eligibility decisions are final:** The MRAG and ARC decisions on eligibility cannot be appealed after outcomes are released. It is therefore important to get the framing right before submission. You will not receive a final eligibility decision until outcomes are announced; if an application is ruled ineligible, it receives no banding/ranking feedback. Avoid medical framing so you still receive useful reviewer feedback even if unsuccessful.
- **Check every element of your application:** Do not overlook titles, headings, figure/table captions, and National Interest Test statements (NITs); anything implying a clinical or disease focus can trigger an MRP review.
- **Disease datasets:** Applications must not include solely of disease-only datasets. Combining data from healthy and disease cohorts to investigate normal biological processes — or using mixed databases (for example, the ABLE database) — may be eligible, provided the primary aim is to advance non-medical, fundamental knowledge.
- **Animal models:** If you are utilising animal models, only the “normal” conditions involved in biological process must be studied and mentioned in the proposal. The F2 must state that the animal models are model systems to generate new knowledge and not understanding any diseases. Ensure the aims and methods clearly align with the F2 statement.
- For more advice on the eligibility of your ARC application, contact RIC-ARCgrants@unimelb.edu.au

MDHS resources

Below are links to MDHS seminar recordings with segments providing advice about the ARC MRP:

- [2025 MDHS RISE seminar: ARC DECRA Fellowship](#)
 - See segment by ARC Assessor Prof Linda Bennett speaking to the ARC MRP. (Linda’s presentation starts at 31:03 in the video, with ARC MRP specifically addressed at 40:45)
- [2024 MDHS RISE seminar: Pitching to the ARC for health and medical researchers](#)
 - See segment by a Member of MRAG outlining how applications picked up for potential breach are reviewed by the Medical Research Advisory Group (addressed from 33.18 in the video)

Key ARC Resources

- [ARC Eligibility Examples](#)
- [ARC Frequently Asked Questions](#)