

DEBRA Australia

Research Grant Application Guidelines, Terms and Conditions 2023

1. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

DEBRA Australia is pleased to call for applications for new research funding for projects aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of children and adults with Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), in any of DEBRA Australia's priority research areas. The deadline for the application submission is **5pm EDST, 15TH November 2023**. Two grants will be offered. One to the value of \$50,000 for principal investigator who is an established researcher and one to the value of \$30,000 to early career researcher who is less than 7 years post PhD at time of application. Both grants will be offered over a 1-year period (2024). It is planned that decisions on funding from this call will be notified in late December 2023 or early January 2024.

Projects may be laboratory based, a clinical study, or a combination. As DEBRA Australia is keen to create a more robust and collaborative EB research environment in Australia, projects which involve Australian or international collaboration are encouraged. Projects which involve in-kind or co-contribution are also highly encouraged. Projects are expected to be completed by March 2025 with respective progress and final reports to DEBRA Australia due after 6 months (approximately July 2024) and 12 months (February/March 2025) from the commencement of each grant. Grants will be paid in two equal instalments in February 2024 and September 2024 (following assessment of progress report), on receipt of an invoice from the institution. One application ONLY per Principal Investigator will be considered. However, other researchers in a group may apply for a grant in their own right as chief investigator. Only one grant per institution will be awarded.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to study these guidelines, terms and conditions carefully before preparing their application.

Our Research Priorities, which are aligned with the priorities of DEBRA International, are:

1. Improving understanding of EB biology to create new concepts for diagnosis and treatment.
2. Developing EB disease-modifying and curative therapies.
3. Preventing and curing severe EB disease consequences: chronic wounds, fibrosis, and cancer.
4. Improving clinical care and symptom relief in EB through research.

2. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

2.1 Format & Submission: Applications shall follow DEBRA Australia's application format, using the form available from DEBRA Australia's office (secretary@debra.org.au) or website (www.debra.org.au).

Applications must be prepared using Arial font, size 11, with standard margins of 2.5cm. Applications that do not conform to the guidelines or to instructions in the application form will NOT be accepted.

One electronic copy of the application in PDF format directly converted from the word document should be emailed to secretary@debra.org.au. Signatures are not required on the PDF version, but a scan of the signature page with the applicable signatures should also be provided.

NB: Late applications will NOT be accepted.

2.2 Project size and scope: The application may relate to a novel small research project that may be a part of a larger project that applicants are undertaking, or a new small pilot project. Applicants must be realistic about the amount of work that can be achieved in the time frame and within the budget requested. DEBRA Australia cannot provide funding for projects that overall have insufficient funding or resources. Applicants are asked to provide details of other funding and infrastructure that will be available to them to ensure the project can be completed successfully. Applicants must demonstrate funding from other sources for other aspects of a larger project. Funding will be for a 12-month period only. Requests for funding for longer periods will not be considered.

2.3 Project Description: The aims and objectives of the proposal should be clearly stated in the light of existing knowledge of the subject area. Similarly, relevant hypotheses will be judged in relation to the description of other research. The description of the methods should be concise, yet contain sufficient information to enable the reviewers to judge the feasibility and appropriateness of the project in relation to its objectives or hypotheses. Evidence will also be sought to ensure that the applicants will be able to establish the methods for their research. Experimental design will be scrutinised to ensure that it is based on sound statistical principles. Any statistical method used in preparation of the application should be detailed. Statistical methods not commonly used should be supported by references. Key activities and milestones must be outlined in the application form to enable evaluation of the achievement of these milestones at each reporting period.

2.4 Impact on EB: The application must clearly explain how the proposed project fits with DEBRA Australia's research priorities and the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of children and adults with Epidermolysis Bullosa.

2.5 Personnel: The grant applicant is expected to be of sufficient seniority and experience to manage the project. An estimate of time to be spent on the project by the Principal Investigator (PI) and other participants must be given, plus any anticipated significant absences of senior investigators during the grant period.

2.6 Eligibility for salary support: DEBRA Australia will not normally fund any part of the salary of the PI or other senior investigators, as it is assumed that they will already have a guaranteed position for at least the length of time covered by the grant application. The grant may be used to part-fund junior and technical personnel, but other sources of funding must also be declared.

2.7 Other eligible expenditure: DEBRA Australia will fund research consumables, expenses and the purchase of special equipment associated solely with the grant application, as detailed in

DEBRA Australia's formal offer of the grant. It is not the policy of the committee to recommend funding for items which might normally be expected to be provided by the organisation's allocation for goods and services. Institutional or administration levies will not be funded. Travel expenses, including attendance at meetings or conferences cannot be met from the grant.

2.8 Related grants: All applicants will be required to supply information regarding current external grants held and applications pending which are relevant to the application. DEBRA Australia will not fund projects that form part of the core activity of another funded grant. Projects which have received funding from DEBRA International may receive top-up funding from DEBRA Australia for an additional element of the project. Normally a project already receiving external funding will not be recommended for funding by DEBRA Australia. However special consideration may be requested if the other grant is far smaller than that being requested from DEBRA Australia. Nevertheless, applicants are encouraged and expected to seek funds elsewhere wherever possible. If other funding is successfully obtained for a project that is funded by DEBRA Australia, then DEBRA Australia's funding will be withdrawn and reallocated to another fundable project as appropriate.

2.9 Institutional approvals: Project proposals must include the support of the relevant Department Head and evidence of submission to appropriate institutional committees such as Ethics or Biosafety Committees.

2.10 Outstanding reports or funds: If the Chief Investigator has any outstanding reports or funds not expended from a previous DEBRA Australia or International research project grant, these must be finalised prior to making an application for the current funding round. Failure to do so may make the applicant ineligible for future funding.

2.11 Review of Applications: Each application will be subjected to a careful review by the Research Committee which will submit its recommendations to the DEBRA Australia Board. Reports from up to three external referees appointed by the Research Grants Committee will be taken into account. Applicants may request in writing that a certain individual NOT be contacted as a referee for their application, however the Research Committee will make the final decision about this. The Board's decision on the awarding of Research Grants will be regarded as final and the Board will not enter into discussion with unsuccessful applicants.

The Research Grants Committee and the external reviewers will take into consideration the following in reviewing the applications:

- Scientific quality (excellence of the research grant application).
- Significance and innovation.
- Track record of the applicant and team, relative to the opportunity.
- Appropriateness of proposed budget including value for money.
- Timeframe and feasibility of achieving outcomes.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR RESEARCH GRANTS

3.1 If you receive project grant funds from DEBRA Australia which are, in part or in whole, received by us from another source, which has its own additional reporting requirements, this will be made clear to you at the time of the grant offer. Acceptance of the grant offer means that you agree to meet these requirements too.

3.2 In the extreme cases of contemporaneous research developments negating the meaningful conclusion of the research, or where DEBRA Australia's financial position is such that funding of the grant cannot be continued for the full term, DEBRA Australia reserves the right to discontinue the grant by giving three months' notice of the intention to do so.

3.3 It is DEBRA Australia's policy to publicise as widely as possible its grants and the scientific progress achieved through them. It is a condition of accepting financial assistance that grant holders agree to co-operate in such publicity efforts.

3.4 DEBRA Australia must be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable of any potentially patentable discovery or invention arising from work supported in whole or in part by DEBRA Australia funding. DEBRA Australia's written consent must be obtained prior to any disclosure or publication in any form of material or details relating to any such invention or discovery. Information about existing or pending applications related to relevant intellectual property rights must also be provided in the application.

3.5 DEBRA Australia requires the findings of the research it funds in full, or in part to be published promptly, but with due regard to protecting the intellectual property of research outputs. The support of DEBRA Australia must be acknowledged in all publications or other public output arising from the work funded, whether written or oral (e.g. scientific or popular publications, press releases, conferences, seminars, etc.). DEBRA Australia must be acknowledged explicitly as the sponsor or co-sponsor of the research.

3.6 The results of the research and any intellectual property rights subsisting in the results must not be licensed on an exclusive basis for the treatment, prevention, or diagnosis of Epidermolysis Bullosa (the "Field") or assigned in whole or in part to any third party without the prior written consent of DEBRA Australia. The grantee will ensure that all reasonable endeavours are used by the exclusive licensee or assignee to exploit the results and intellectual property rights subsisting in the results in the Field. If all reasonable endeavours are not used, the grantee must terminate or convert the licence to non-exclusive or procure the assignment or license back of the results and intellectual property to the grantee for exploitation in the Field.

3.7 DEBRA Australia is entitled to receive a reasonable proportion of any financial benefit received by the grantee or its affiliates arising from exploitation of the results of the research supported by DEBRA Australia and any intellectual property rights subsisting in the results. If the financial benefit received exceeds a value of AUD\$50,000, then the grantee shall promptly pay to DEBRA Australia an amount negotiated in good faith by the parties and representing a reasonable proportion of any financial benefit received by the grantee or its affiliates.



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3.8 Continuation of grants will depend upon receipt of a satisfactory interim report 6 months after the first payment is made and a final report at the end of the grant period. No payment of a grant owing will be made until any outstanding report has been received and accepted by DEBRA Australia. Reports will be circulated to the DEBRA Australia Board and may be shared with DEBRA International. The lay summary may be circulated to other grant holders, national EB Support Groups, and used in publicity and placed on the DEBRA Australia website. If there is any reason why this should not occur with an individual report, please inform DEBRA at the time of submission.

3.9 Receipts for expenditure incurred during the period should be provided with the reports. Funds unspent or uncommitted at the termination of the grant shall be returned to DEBRA Australia within eight weeks unless the DEBRA Australia Board otherwise approves.

3.10 Grants awarded by DEBRA Australia are subject to the standard conditions of the grant at the time it is awarded. DEBRA Australia reserves the right to change conditions of the grant from time to time.