

Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

Early Career Research Mentorship Program

2026 Mid-Year Intake



ISLHD Early Career Research Mentorship Program

The ISLHD Research Office invites applications from early career clinician researchers to participate in the mid-year intake of the Early Career Research Mentorship Program.

The program is designed to build research capability, confidence, and culture across the District, by supporting clinicians to develop, lead, and translate research aligned with ISLHD and NSW Health strategic priorities. The program will support clinicians to develop research-focused projects that generate new knowledge, rather than local quality improvement activities. Applicants are encouraged to propose questions that aim to investigate, test, or explore evidence gaps that could contribute to the broader clinical literature.

Objectives

The program aims to:

- Build a sustainable pipeline of clinician researchers within ISLHD
- Support research that addresses local challenges and community need
- Embed equity, data-driven insights and translation into research practice
- Strengthen links between clinical services, academia and health system priorities
- Increase ISLHD's research maturity through practical, supported participation

Who should apply

The program is open to early career clinicians employed by ISLHD, including (but not limited to):

- Allied health professionals
- Nursing and midwifery staff
- Medical officers
- Mental health clinicians
- Aboriginal health practitioners
- Population and public health officers.

Applicants **should:**

- Be new to research or early in their research journey
- Have a clinical role within ISLHD
- Have a clear, novel and feasible research idea which has been discussed with, and is supported by, a clinical supervisor
- Discuss protected research time requirements with line managers prior to application.

Previous research experience is not required.

What the program offers

Successful applicants will receive:

- Structured education sessions covering
 - Research question development
 - Research design and methods
 - Writing a research protocol
 - Ethics and governance
 - Using data in research
- Accessing existing data assets
- Types of data, methods of data collection, and data analysis
- Implementation, translation, and dissemination
- Small group mentorship from the Research Office
- Support to develop a research or evaluation project aligned with the ISLHD Research Strategy
- Guidance on ethics applications, research governance, grant readiness, and publication pathways.

Time commitment

- Program duration: 9 – 12 months
- Education sessions: 2 – 3 hours per month
- Independent work is also required to meet program milestones.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed against:

- Alignment with the ISLHD Research Strategy and NSW Health priorities
- Relevance to local service needs
- Applicants' motivation and readiness to engage in research
- Support for the research project idea from a senior clinician who has agreed to supervise the project
- Feasibility within the program timeframe
- Support from line manager for protected research time.

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How to apply

Apply to the ISLHD Research Office via ISLHD-Research@health.nsw.gov.au by submitting:

- A short expression of interest (template provided), including:
 - Clinical role and service
 - Novel research interests or ideas (can be early stage, but needs clinical supervisor support)
 - ISLHD Research Strategy/NSW Health priorities alignment
 - Learning and professional goals that you hope to achieve through the program.

Applications close on 24th July 2026

Application Form

Applicant Details

Full name:

Email address:

Role Title:

Department/Unit:

Facility:

Research Experience

1. Please indicate your level of research experience:
 - ☐ No prior research experience
 - ☐ Participated as a team member in a research or evaluation program
 - ☐ Completed a quality improvement or service evaluation project
 - ☐ Involved in data collection or analysis
 - ☐ Authored or co-authored a report, abstract, or publication
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

2. Do you have any qualifications related to research? If yes, please specify (e.g. honours, coursework masters, research masters, PhD)

Research interest or project idea

1. What is the clinical issue or area you are interested in exploring?
(Max 150 words)

2. Briefly describe your proposed research idea or research question. Outline why it is important in the ISLHD context (*Max 250 words*)

3. Discuss the novelty of your research idea. What gap in patient care or the literature does it aim to address? (*Max 200 words*)

4. What impact would the project have on patient care, services, or clinical practice? (*Max 150 words*)

5. Have you identified any data, patients, or settings where this project could be explored?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please briefly describe (Max 100 words)

6. Which ISLHD Research Strategy focus area does your research align with?

- ☐ Multidisciplinary models of care
- ☐ Translating evidence into practice
- ☐ Scaling successful innovations
- ☐ Use of existing datasets

Briefly explain how your idea aligns with the selected focus area(s) (*Max 100-150 words*)

Motivation and Commitment

1. Why are you interested in participating in this mentorship program? (*Max 150 words*)

2. What do you hope to gain from this program? (*Max 150 words*)

3. Approximately how much time can you commit to the program and your research project per month?

- ☐ < 4 hours
- ☐ 4 – 8 hours
- ☐ 8 – 12 hours
- ☐ 12+ hours

Clinical Supervisor Support

1. Have you discussed your research idea with a clinical supervisor?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (*Applications without prior discussion with a clinical supervisor will not be considered*)

Clinical Supervisor Details

Name:

Position:

Department/Unit:

Email:

2. Has your supervisor indicated support for your research idea, and have they agreed to provide clinical supervision for your project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Clinical Supervisor Confirmation

(To be completed by the Clinical Supervisor OR submitted as a separate email endorsement)

- ☐ I confirm that I have discussed this applicant's research idea with them
- ☐ I confirm that the research idea is feasible, and that the applicant will have access to the patient population or existing data required to complete the project
- ☐ I will support their participation in the program
- ☐ I will provide appropriate clinical supervision during the program

Supervisor Name:

Signature:

Date: