

Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

Early Career Research Mentorship Program 2026



ISLHD Early Career Research Mentorship Program

The ISLHD Research Office invites applications from early career clinician researchers to participate in 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.

Objectives

The program aims to:

- Build a sustainable pipeline of clinician researchers within ISLHD.
- Support research that addresses local health system 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

This 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

Applicants should:

- Be new to research or early in their research journey
- Have a clinical role within ISLHD
- Have an interest in improving care, services or systems through research
- Be supported by their line manager to participate.

Previous research experience is not required.

What the Program Offers

Successful applicants will receive:

- Structured education sessions covering:
 - Developing research question/s
 - Research design and methods
 - Ethics and governance
 - Using data in research
 - Types of data and methods of data collection
 - Data analysis
 - Co-design and equity-focused research
 - Translation and implementation
- One-to-one and small-group mentorship from the Research Office
- Support to develop a feasible research or evaluation project aligned to service priorities
- Guidance on ethics applications, grant readiness and publication pathways
- Connection to a community of practice across ISLHD.

Time Commitment

- Program duration: 6–9 months
- Education sessions: 2-3 hours per month
- Independent project work with mentorship support

Protected time should be discussed with line managers prior to application.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against:

- Alignment with ISLHD research pillars and NSW Health priorities
- Relevance to local clinical or service needs
- Applicant's motivation and readiness to engage in research
- Feasibility within the program timeframe
- Manager endorsement and support

A diversity of disciplines, services and locations is actively encouraged.

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
 - Research interests or idea (can be early-stage)
 - Pillar alignment
 - Learning goals
- Line manager endorsement

Applications close on Friday 13th February 2026.

Application Form

Applicant details

Name:
Role / Discipline:
Department:
Facility:

Research Experience

Please indicate your level of research experience (select all that apply):

- No prior research experience
- Participated as a team member in a research or evaluation project
- 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)

Highest qualification (if relevant to research):

(e.g. undergraduate, honours, coursework masters, research masters, PhD – not required)

Research interests or project idea

In 200–300 words, please describe either:

- a research or evaluation idea you would like to explore, or
- an area of clinical or service challenge you are interested in investigating.

Please include:

- the clinical or service issue
- who it affects
- why it matters in the ISLHD context

Alignment with ISLHD Research Priorities

Which ISLHD research pillar(s) best align with your interest?

(select one or more)

- Person-Centred, Equitable Care and Outcomes
- Integrated, High-Value Models of Care
- Data-Driven Systems Innovation and Translation

Briefly explain how your idea aligns with the selected pillar(s) (100–150 words).

Equity and Community Considerations

Does your proposed area of interest involve or impact any priority populations?

(select all that apply)

- Aboriginal communities
- CALD communities
- Rural or regional populations
- People experiencing disadvantage or barriers to access
- Not applicable / not yet considered

Briefly describe how equity, access, co-design or inclusion could be considered in your project (up to 150 words).

Motivation and Learning Goals

Why are you interested in participating in this program?

(100 words)

What skills or knowledge would you most like to develop through the program?

(select up to three)

- Research design and methods
- Ethics and governance
- Using data in research
- Translation and implementation
- Grant readiness
- Writing for publication
- Building research confidence
- Other (please specify)

Feasibility and Support

Estimated time you could commit to the program (with manager support):

(e.g. hours per month)

Have you discussed participation with your line manager?

- Yes
- In progress
- Not yet

Head of Department Endorsement

I support this applicant's participation in the ISLHD Early Career Research Mentorship Program and will support reasonable protected time for participation.

Name:.....

Department:.....

Signature:.....