



Science | Innovation | Health and medical research

We need the best and the brightest advancing medical research.

That means an investment in your skills.

In addition to your scientific expertise, as medical researchers progress in their careers they are asked to manage budgets, labs and staff. You are required to understand intellectual property, manage grant applications and speak to groups about your research.

In the Best and Brightest report, we found nearly three-quarters of respondents said they would benefit from management and leadership training as well as training in commercialisation and business skills.

By working together, we can help build career paths that reward relevant skills as well as your critical research and technical skills. This will be vital as part of developing and retaining the best and brightest in the MRI sector, building a strong and sustainable medical research capability and positioning the sector for the future.



Why does skills development matter?

For the MRI sector to play the vital role it should in driving high-quality research, innovation, optimal health outcomes and economic prosperity into the future, there's a need for strategic workforce development that will:

- incentivise greater commercial returns from the MRI sector;
- incentivise engagement in the non-commercial translation of research to social, environmental and economic outcomes/impact which can still have major impacts economically through savings in the health system;
- ensure long-term high level medical research capability in the sector;
- ensure preparedness for interdisciplinary research;
- address the obstacles to collaboration between industry, Government and the health sector; and
- develop a skills base better aligned with the nation's innovation and science goals.

To do this will require strategically-driven and integrated skills development and recognition/reward systems. This will necessarily involve:

- developing a program to build skills, competencies and interdisciplinary capabilities in priority areas;
- recognising the importance of commercialisation-related and business development skills to support increased translation of research to impact;
- investing in the leadership and management skills of staff as part of developing a more effective management capability across the sector; and
- incentivising skills development in priority areas by developing structured career paths linked to reward systems.

How could this be achieved?

The reality is that traditionally recognition for a researcher and scientist is a post-graduate qualification e.g. PhD and peer-reviewed publications.

However, in addition to technical and research expertise developed over the course of doctoral training, scientists are increasingly asked to manage budgets, laboratories and staff. To progress in their careers and be effective, the modern scientist is likely to need a broader skill set including:

- financial management;
- people management;
- project management;
- risk management including health and safety;
- strategic planning;
- marketing and communication;
- leadership and ethics;
- business law;
- understanding of intellectual property;
- research grant management;
- commercialisation training;
- technology transfer/business development; and
- understanding of diversity and equity issues.

How can we help you and the sector in the area of strategic skills development?

Professionals Scientists Australia is keen to work with the sector to help MRIs to develop the leadership, management, business and commercialisation-related skills of their researchers.

At the policy level, we'll advocate for:

- Government funding for skills development in strategically important areas; and
- strong investment in deepening and broadening the skills base of the sector.

At a practical level, we'll build a development program to specifically recognise the leadership, management, commercialisation and business skills of medical researchers.

At the workplace level, we'll push for:

- MRIs to invest in the development of staff in these key areas; and
- to build remuneration systems and career advancement frameworks that recognise and reward skills development.

