ADVERTISEMENT FOR MACH-TRACK

University of Melbourne and the Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (MACH)

PhD studentship opportunity for research-minded health practitioners from the following groups:

1) ***Doctors in vocational training in a MACH-affiliated partner in any hospital specialty, general practice or public health;***
2) ***Dentists in vocational/specialist/DCD training in a MACH-affiliated partner;***
3) ***Nurses and Midwives at Masters level and working towards an advanced level of practice;***
4) ***Physiotherapists working towards advanced practice and;***
5) ***Other AHPs in Victorian Government recognised disciplines working towards advanced practice.***

The MACH Track: A pathway for integration of research career development with completion of post-registration clinical training and career development; the next cohort will be commencing in February 2027.

Applications are encouraged from Australian citizens and permanent residents currently in post as eligible registered health practitioners in one of the ten MACH-affiliated health services (for details see below) or on a training rotation that will bring the trainee to a MACH-affiliated health service by February 2027, who are keen to pursue early steps towards a career as a clinician researcher and a role as one of the future leaders of clinical innovation in Australia. The following groups of practitioners are eligible:

1) **Doctors** in vocational training in any recognised specialty, including General Practice and Public Health. Applicants should have won a place (or anticipate doing so before February 2027) in a Melbourne-centred vocational training program approved by the relevant Royal/Specialist College; for specialties with two-stage programs (eg physicians) trainees should have secured a place in an advanced training program. General Practice trainees will require sponsorship by the University of Melbourne Department of General Practice (see below). Public Health applicants must have a Master of Public Health and be anticipating a work role in a MACH-affiliated organisation in 2027; these include The University of Melbourne (contact Prof Nathan Grills ngrills@unimelb.edu.au), the North Eastern Public Health Unit (contact Dr Annaliese van Diemen annaliese.vandiemen@austin.org.au) and the North Western Public Health Unit (contact Dr Finn Romanes finn.romanes@wh.org.au). The Track is supported by the leadership of all 19 MACH partners and by all Royal and Specialist Colleges approached so far. Once appointed each trainee will work with the MACH Office, clinical employers, and the relevant training committees of their Royal/Specialist College to craft a bespoke program that will ensure completion of an excellent clinical training pathway.
2) **Dentists** in specialist training who will be in a vocational training post in a MACH-affiliated organisation from 1st February 2027 for at least a year, or completing the final year of the University of Melbourne DCD course during 2027 (contact A/Prof Mihiri Silva mihiri.silva@unimelb.edu.au).
3) **Nurses and Midwives** employed within a MACH-affiliated Health Service; who have or are completing a Masters degree in Nursing, Midwifery or other relevant subject such as Public Health; and are working with an advanced level of practice (for example, Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Consultant or Nurse Practitioner) and who aspire to Nurse/Midwife Clinician Researcher roles that combine specialist, advanced clinical practice with research leadership.
4) **Physiotherapists** working towards senior clinical roles within a MACH-affiliated Health Service. For example, many MACH-affiliated Health Services have roles for senior advanced practice physiotherapists (typically at Grade 3 or 4) and organise in-house training programs to prepare early career practitioners (typically at Grades 1 or 2); for example, Austin Health has senior, advanced practice clinical roles for physiotherapists in ICU, Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation.
5) **All other AHPs** in disciplines recognised by Victorian Government (https://www.health.vic.gov.au/allied-health-workforce/allied-health-professions). As for physiotherapists candidates should be working towards advanced/independent clinical practice as appropriate for their discipline.

While most applicants will be working currently to a full-time pattern, MACH-Track can accommodate practitioners working maximum part-time (0.8FTE or above). Eligibility enquiries can be sent to mach-track@unimelb.edu.au.

With regard to research interests, the scheme is for "all-comers"; interest in any topic relevant to health and medical research can be pursued. The ***Appendix*** provides a briefing on the very wide range of research strengths and research training opportunities available across MACH.

The Melbourne Academic Centre for Health

The Melbourne Academic Centre for Health (MACH - pronounced "Mack") is a NHMRC-designated Advanced Health Research Translation Centre (https://www.machaustralia.org/). MACH is comprised of 10 health services, 7 medical research institutes and the University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (which administers the MACH); La Trobe University is an affiliate member. This collaboration aims to translate research to improve health and healthcare, and to stimulate the economy. The Executive Director is Professor Sir John Savill FRCP FAHMS FRS, formerly Director of the Edinburgh Clinical Academic Track in the UK.

The health service members are:

Austin Health, Mercy Health, Northern Health, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Royal Children's Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, Royal Women's Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital, Western Health.

The medical research institute members are:

Centre for Eye Research Australia, Florey Institute, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, National Ageing Research Institute, Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute, St Vincent's Institute, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.

The collaboration represents the largest concentration of health and medical research in Australia, typically accounting for around 25% of the nation's expenditure in the field. There are also superb opportunities for interdisciplinary research involving other Faculties in the University of Melbourne.

The MACH Track

The MACH Track is a structured, mentored and fully funded career development pathway for exceptional research-minded health practitioners pursuing post-registration clinical training (see diagram below). The Track seeks to develop the future leaders of clinical innovation by offering an opportunity to integrate completion of advanced clinical training of the highest standard with pre-PhD, PhD and post-PhD training in research associated with the University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences and seven affiliated Medical Research Institutes. Integration will be achieved by delivery of the trainee's planned vocational/clinical training program on a flexible basis. Inevitably the pathway will add ~3 years to the duration of clinical training but the Track will reward this investment of trainee time by providing an exceptional pathway towards leadership, and through enhanced income during the 3 year PhD phase, when compared to conventional PhD scholarships (2026 rate is $39, 500 p.a. tax-free). This structured pathway will offer field-leading mentorship and support tailored to the needs of early career clinician researchers of exceptional promise. The pathway comprises:

Year 1 - 80% Clinical career development / 20% PhD run-in training. Health Services will employ the carefully selected trainees on a 100% contract for their previously planned training post but will allow an average of 0.2FTE for Track work over the year, starting in February 2027. Comparable arrangements will be made to support Dental trainees, General Practice trainees and Public Health trainees. There will be an introductory one-week orientation (to be held in late 2026) followed during 2027 by around 3 "taster" mini-projects undertaken on a flexible one day per week basis and offering potential progression to a PhD. Towards the end of the first year trainees will select the PhD opportunity that suits their needs best and prepare a PhD proposal. This will be defended at an interview with a panel of Track leads (with time for amendment before commencing the project). Such preparation and planning ensures that the trainee "hits the ground running" for the next phase:

Years 2, 3, 4 - 80% PhD / 20% clinical career development. The carefully selected PhD program will then be pursued, ideally with two supervisors, who could be from different MACH members if appropriate; the cohort appointed in 2026 will start this phase in February 2028. The lead Research Institute or University Department will provide a top-up stipend in addition to the 3.5 year RTP (Research Training Program) Scholarship to the maximum 75% allowed. The overall scholarship is worth approximately $69,125 p.a tax-free, based on 2026 rate (likely to indexed ~2% per year). Unrelated to the PhD course of study, the trainee will also be employed by their parent health service, with the opportunity to work clinically up to an average of 8 hours per week (~0.2 FTE), which, subject to

clinical training requirements could include mutually attractive night and weekend work. Comparable arrangements will be made to support General Practice and Public Health trainees.

Year 5 - 80% Clinical career development / 20% preparation for post-doc fellowship application. As the trainee works towards completion of clinical training and eligibility for senior career-grade appointments, an average of 8 hours per week (~0.2FTE) will be remunerated by the parent health service during which the trainee can prepare and defend their thesis (essential for progression to year 6), publish papers and, subject to external funding, continue research. Comparable arrangements will be made to support General Practice and Public Health trainees as they complete the requirements for Fellowship leading to eligibility for specialist registration with AHPRA. The aim of this academic activity is to position the carefully mentored trainee for a post-doctoral fellowship enabling transition to professional independence.

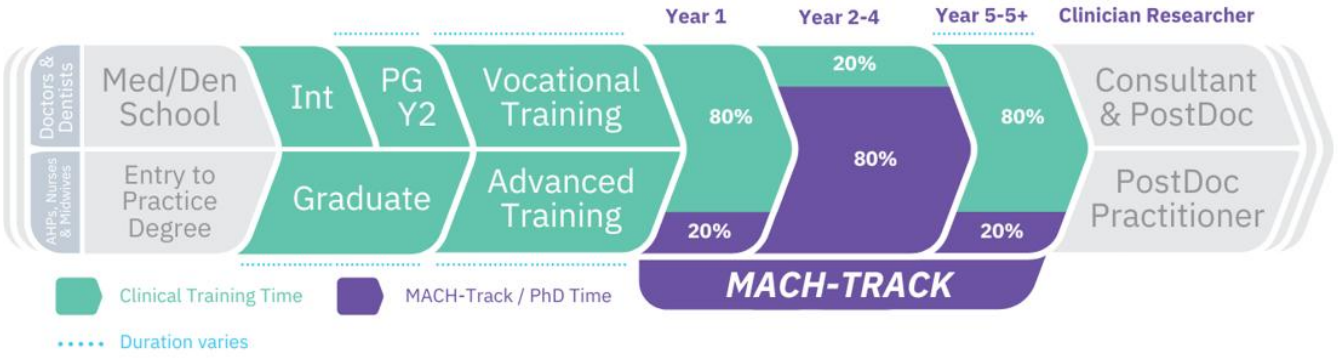
The MACH-Track offers the following benefits:

Continuity- Engagement with both clinical and research training on an 80/20 or 20/80 basis throughout will ensure continued engagement with the translational mission of the MACH.

Cohort- Appointees will join a MACH-wide community of well-mentored MACH-Track colleagues and are also members of a cohort of developing leaders in their parent health service; Track leads and PhD supervisors also benefit from cross-fertilisation as they provide supervision and mentorship to Track trainees.

Choice- The trainee will select from a wide range of potential two-supervisor 3-year PhD projects towards the end of the initial year of 80/20 clinical training/ PhD run-in, which provides "taster" mini projects.

MACH-Track Program Structure for Doctors, Nurses, Midwives, and Physiotherapists (NMP)



University of Melbourne and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

The University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences is Australia's pre-eminent medical, health sciences and biomedical faculty and is recognised for its research, teaching, training and policy leadership across all of these fields. The Faculty employs more than 1,900 members of staff, attracts more than 8,000 students each year and comprises six schools; 33 departments, centres and institutes; and offers 128 courses.

The Faculty is Australia's overall leader in clinical, pre-clinical and health sciences and was ranked 37th globally in 2026 by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. In the field of clinical medicine and pharmacology, the Jiao Tong ranks the University of Melbourne as the first in Australia and number 20 in the world in 2026. The University educates more health professionals, graduates, research and higher degree students and attracts more national competitive funding than any other Australian university.

The Faculty employs over 1,300 academic research staff. Hospital departments employ 39 per cent of MDHS academic staff. The University has over 2,000 hospital-based honorary staff and more than 500 honorary staff in partner institutes. The Faculty's annual research income is more than A$225million: 50 per cent of the University of Melbourne total.

Faculty researchers publish more than 4,000 peer reviewed publications every year: 44 per cent of publications include an international co-author, hailing from more than 140 countries in the last five years. The top five countries represented are the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Approximately 1,500 graduate research students conduct research supervised by over 1,500 staff and honouraries across the Faculty's six schools and in affiliated health services and research institutes.

Application procedure

Pre-application enquiries may be sent to mach-track@unimelb.edu.au. Potential medical practitioner candidates concerned about eligibility should provide brief details of scheduled appointments in their college-approved vocational training program.

Trainees in Public Health and Dentistry working in the University of Melbourne schemes should consult Prof Nathan Grills (Public Health ngrills@unimelb.edu.au) or A/Prof Mihiri Silva (Dentistry mihiri.silva@unimelb.edu.au) as sponsorship by the scheme organiser is required.

Trainees in General Practice should consult Prof Lena Sanci (l.sanci@unimelb.edu.au) as sponsorship by the University of Melbourne Department of General Practice and Primary Care is a requirement.

Applications should be sent by **9am Monday 3rd August 2026** to mach-track@unimelb.edu.au and must include:-

1) A letter of application no longer than 500 words explaining why the applicant wants to pursue PhD training through the MACH-Track; **NB** it is not necessary to express interest in any particular PhD project, but it would help if "all-comer" applicants could identify a general area of interest such as 'cancer research', 'big data', 'clinical trials', 'stroke rehabilitation' or any other broad area of research interest;
2) A) FOR DOCTORS AND DENTISTS, brief details of the candidate's vocational training program, with dates and location of each attachment; proposed end date; and details of the relevant College training committee including email contact for the lead College administrator;
   B) FOR NURSES, MIDWIVES, PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AND OTHER AHPs, brief details of the plans to develop towards advanced/independent practice;
3) Full CV, to include brief details of any research projects undertaken, with details as to how these were disseminated (report for supervisors, abstract presentation at meeting, publication, etc).
4) A brief letter of support from an academic referee able to comment on the candidate's potential for completing a PhD;
5) A brief letter from the candidate's current clinical career development supervisor confirming that the candidate is making satisfactory progress and stating support for the candidate seeking flexibility in clinical career development if appointed.
6) For General Practice trainees, a brief note from Prof Lena Sanci confirming sponsorship by the University of Melbourne Department of General Practice.
7) Dental trainees employed by the University of Melbourne will require a brief note from Dr Mihiri Silva confirming sponsorship by the Melbourne Dental School.

Important Dates 2026

	Doctors/Dentists	AHPs, Nurses, Midwives
Application Opens	**1 June 2026**	
Application Closes	**3 August 2026 (9am AEST)**	
Shortlisting	**1 September 2026**	**31 August 2026**
Invitation to Interview sent out	**Week of 7 September 2026**	
Interview	**5 October 2026**	**28 September 2026**
Mandatory Orientation Week	**23-27 November 2026**	
Start date	**Early February 2027**	