

Writing an Effective Personnel Support Package (PSP) Justification

Note: The length of your PSP Justification is limited to 1000 characters

Personnel Support Package Justifications for PG18:

- The NHMRC has specified that Applicants should **not name any person on the application who is not a Chief or Associate Investigator.** When requesting Personnel Support Packages, the position title should be provided instead of a name.

Professional Research Persons, Technical Support Staff & Casuals:

- A **Professional Research Person** is a graduate with recognised qualifications who will be employed to undertake research on this proposal. The Professional Research Person will not have responsibility for the proposal.
- **Technical Support Staff** includes research students and technical staff. Do not include graduate personnel as Technical Support Staff. These staff can only be employed on a PSP1 rate.
- **Casual Staff** are to be contracted at hourly rates should not be included as part of the PSP requests but rather should be included under Direct Research Costs in Part B-PR.

Part 1: Introduction

State the key facts and figures in your opening sentences:

1. **The Position Title for the PSP requested**
 2. **Percentage allocation of effort this team member will spend on the project. *This is particularly important as you will later need to be specific in justifying the breakdown of time required to undertake the responsibilities of the role.***
 3. **Number of years being sought for funding for the PSP**
- “Funding is requested to support a Project Administrator at 20% FTE for the calendar year 2018”
 - “Funding is requested to appoint a Data Manager with responsibility for (Aim or Project Area) for 30% FTE in years 1-3 of the project.”

Where a higher level of expertise is inherent to the part of the project undertaken by the PSP, make this clear early on:

- “This component of this project requires highly specialized skills...”

Provide a brief overview of task pertaining to the position:

- “The General Research Assistant is needed to help with participant appointment scheduling and managing the large amount of data; including preparation of measures and files, chasing up data with families, measure scoring, data entry, checking and cleaning”.
- “A Research Assistant who is blind to treatment assignment is needed to manage coding of the family interactions. Inter-rater reliability is needed for this coding and so this person will manage a team of

undergraduate volunteers who are trained and conduct the majority of the coding, while he/she does the reliability checking by coding 60% of the data a second time.”

Open or conclude the overview of tasks with a sentence to reinforce the academic level this position would be appointed-at and importance of the position:

- **Opening-** “A full time Honours-level Research Assistant is required for this project to ensure adequate scientific knowledge to effectively conduct experiments.”
- **Closing-** “Thus, this position is critical for the successful completion of these experiments. The appropriate level for this position would be honours level psychology or greater”

Part 2: Developing the Argument

Introduce an overall or specific project goal which the PSP will be essential in contributing to:

- “This project aims to further establish...”
- “Under Aim 3.1, we will undertake...”

Explain the need for the central task the PSP would undertake as part of the project goal:

- “Accurate data entry is critical to the success of the proposed study...”
- “The lab assistant would be trained to undertake this analysis, which is time consuming but essential to the project...”

State any additional critical tasks to be performed by the PSP:

- “The PSP would also be responsible for maintenance of the electronic case report form and all study tracking logs, as well as adverse event coding, electronic database cleaning and production of study reports for the purposes of weekly team meetings”
- “He/She is responsible for administrative activities generated by the core project team. These include document filing, drafting and formatting of letters, creation of study files, photocopying, scanning, communications, preparations for various study-related meetings and staff travel arrangements.”

Emphasise the skills and responsibilities required to undertake these tasks:

- “In conjunction with CIA, this person will be responsible for conducting the detailed overnight physiology experiments including electromyography (EMG) recordings. The EMG studies require genioglossus and tensor palatini electrodes to be inserted by a suitably trained person.”
- “He/she will serve as Independent Evaluator and will be required to undertake blinded post-treatment and follow-up assessments.”
- “The data analyses for these studies require a skilled individual with a strong background in sleep and muscle physiology to accurately identify the appropriate data points for analysis.”

Provide a detailed breakdown of the time required to undertake these responsibilities:

- “It is anticipated that 60 patients will be treated over the final two years of the project, culminating in approximately 900 therapy hours overall. This therapist will complete approximately 30 face-to-face

clinical (therapy and assessment) hours per week, and another 14 hours will be devoted to arranging appointments, and writing notes and reports.”

- “Overall, this will require approximately 220 hours of face-to-face assessment, and an additional 180 hours of training, assessment coordination, supervision, and report-writing”.

For higher level PSPs, it is particularly important to outline any complex aspects of the project and relate them back to the expertise required for the position:

- “This is an ambitious project aimed at a challenging yet important subject of cell biology: the trafficking of cholesterol. This project involves two experimental systems (yeast and human), and also many techniques such as microscopy, lipid analysis, proteomic analysis and protein purification”
- “A candidate with those experience, plus knowledge on intracellular sterol trafficking and lipid metabolism is desirable. Given the technical difficulty associated with this project, a person with determination, advanced skills and relevant experience who can work relatively independently is highly desirable.”

Describe the skills/experience/academic qualifications appropriate for this level of employment:

- This person requires training and experience in project management, clinical assessment and treatment, an understanding of research design, ethics, and management processes, and good team and leadership skills. The appropriate level would be Masters level clinical psychology plus several years experience, or PhD level clinical psychology.

If you are hiring staff overseas (in applications electing to promote global health for example), compare the local hiring level to the one in Australia and at UNSW:

- “The Team Leader will supervise the Research Assistant and both will administer the survey in Pakistani prisons. This position is crucial to smooth running of data collection in prisons in 4 sites around Pakistan. S/he will undergo training in the use of the survey and how the blood samples are to be collected. S/he will have a Masters Degree and be employed for 12 months. Estimated annual salary is \$20,000. To employ this person FTE in Pakistan is equivalent to 40% of PSP1.”

Note on Higher-Level PSPs:

If you are requesting an **PSP of Level 4 and above** for a team member that will be supervised, you need to put forth a clear argument as to why an expert personnel would require supervision and why the role could not be performed by a team member recruited on a lower PSP.

If you are requesting a **PSP of Level 5**, this person MUST be listed as a CI. Examples of three separate Assessor comments for previous Project Grant applications signify the importance of this:

- “The appointment of a postdoc to this grant is justified; the appointment at the level of PSP5 is not. **An appointment at this level would be expected to be a CI**”
- “Salary at PSP5 level is requested. **Why wasn’t X included as a CI on this grant application?**”
- “The named investigator is clearly capable but this position is not justified in the context of the level of autonomy anticipated for a PSP5 researcher. **It is unclear why Dr X is not a CI on this application.**”