

# Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre Clinician Researcher Fellowship Scheme 2021

## Funding Rules



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## 1 Introduction

The Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC) is a research collaboration between the five hospital and health services (HHSs) in northern Queensland (Cairns and Hinterland, Mackay, North West, Torres and Cape and Townsville), the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) and James Cook University (JCU), including the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM). As of June 2019, TAAHC has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

The purpose of TAAHC is to improve the health of the northern Queensland population and grow prosperity in the tropical region through a partnership that enhances collective capability in health service delivery, health and medical research, and workforce development. Through an emphasis on translational research, TAAHC aims to embed research into health service delivery to improve quality and efficiency of care, enhance recruitment and retention of professionals in the region and encourage greater investment in the north.

These Funding Rules describe the provision and distribution of funding for the Clinician Researcher Fellowship scheme offered by TAAHC. The Funding Rules will be supported by a TAAHC Research Services Contract between TAAHC and the successful Lead Organisation.

## 2 Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre Clinician Researcher Fellowship Scheme

The Fellowship scheme delivers on two of the aims of the TAAHC 2019-2022 Research Strategy:

- Enhance the capacity and capability of Members with an emerging research profile to undertake research of relevance to the northern Queensland population and engage in research partnership and collaboration with other TAAHC members; and
- Consolidate and enhance the research capacity of Members with an established research profile to develop new, high-level programs of research and promote partnership and collaboration between TAAHC Members

The Fellowships are intended to support TAAHC clinicians to undertake research linked to their practice. The aim of the Fellowship is to provide protected, guaranteed time for a clinician to undertake research. Through the Fellowship scheme, TAAHC effectively 'purchases' a portion of a clinician's time, allowing them to devote a percentage of their time to research activity.

The scheme recognises that clinician researchers (including doctors, nurses, dentists, allied health practitioners and clinical scientists) are best placed to identify health challenges that can benefit from research, lead patient centred research discoveries and facilitate improved service delivery and quality of care through research translation.

The objectives of the program are to:

1. Develop TAAHC clinician researchers and support their research career progression, particularly toward attainment of a formal research qualification or securing competitive research funding from external agencies.
2. Support health and medical research projects that are aligned with TAAHC Research Themes and have potential to lead to better health outcomes and/or service delivery improvements for northern Queensland communities.

3. Build collaborative linkages between TAAHC Members to support the translation of research discoveries into health service delivery.

## 2.1 Category and duration of funding

There are two categories of Fellowship available:

Category	Eligibility	Duration
Emerging	Applicant does not hold a Higher Degree by Research; <3 peer reviewed publications as first author; and has not held an external competitive research grant as Lead or Chief Investigator	3-12 months at a maximum 20% FTE for the duration of the Fellowship
Experienced	0-10 years post-PhD (or equivalent research higher degrees <sup>1</sup> ) OR have published a minimum of three peer-reviewed publications within the last four years, with at least one publication as lead author; and have held an external competitive research grant as Chief or Lead Investigator	3-12 months at a maximum 20% FTE for the duration of the Fellowship

The minimum fellowship duration for all categories is three months, up to a maximum duration of 12 months.

The Fellowship will support research activity for up to and including 20% Full Time Equivalent for the duration of the Fellowship.

Applicants may propose a research project in any clinical discipline that demonstrates significant potential to be translated into better health outcomes and/or health service delivery improvements, in alignment with the TAAHC Research Themes:

- Service delivery to regional, rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations;
- Non-communicable diseases with high regional prevalence;
- Innovative health workforce models;
- Infectious diseases and biosecurity.

## 2.2 Emerging Clinician Research Fellowship

Emerging Clinician Research Fellowships are aimed at clinicians with limited prior research experience who are enrolled in or are intending to enrol in a formal research qualification, such as a Graduate

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<sup>1</sup> An equivalent research higher degree is a research qualification that is equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*

Certificate of Research Methods, Graduate Diploma of Research Methods, Master of Philosophy or PhD.

The Fellowship may be used to support the completion of specific milestones that form part of the applicant's coursework, such as a literature review, confirmation of candidature seminar or drafting of thesis chapters.

Applicants who are not enrolled or do not intend to enrol in a formal research qualification are still eligible to apply to the scheme. However, intent to enrol or enrolment in a formal research qualification will be favourably viewed during the assessment process when considering the applicant's track record and potential, particularly as it relates to the applicant's "clinical research career vision and development plans for next four years." See Section 4 for further details.

### 2.3 Experienced Clinician Research Fellowship

Experienced Clinician Research Fellowships are aimed at clinicians with existing research experience. The Fellowship seeks to support these clinicians to further their research career, particularly toward securing competitive research funding from other funding sources, increasing outputs and furthering the translation of research into clinical practice.

### 2.4 Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Hold a salaried appointment with one of the TAAHC Hospital and Health Service Members in a clinically related role (minimum 50% FTE) over the duration of the Fellowship.
- Must continue to be employed, reside and conduct research in the TAAHC region for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) with a current annual practicing certificate, or for members of non-registered and self-regulated professions, eligibility for professional membership of the relevant professional association.
- **Emerging clinician researcher** - applicant does not hold a Higher Degree by Research; <3 peer reviewed publications as first author; and has not held an external competitive research grant as Lead or Chief Investigator
- **Experienced clinician researcher** – hold a research higher degree (PhD or equivalent<sup>2</sup>) and be up to 10 years post-award at the closing date of the Fellowship scheme OR have published a minimum of three peer-reviewed publications within the last four years, with at least one publication as lead author; and have held an external competitive research grant as Chief or Lead Investigator.
- An applicant can apply for or hold a Fellowship in one category only in any one round.
- Applicants who have previously held a Fellowship in the experienced clinician researcher category within the last two years (as of the time of application) are ineligible to apply for and receive a Clinician Researcher Fellowship.
- Investigators may hold up to two active projects funded by TAAHC across its funding schemes (Research Assistance, Micro-Funding, Seed Funding, Clinician Researcher Fellowship).

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<sup>2</sup> An equivalent research higher degree is a research qualification that is equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*

## 2.5 Research Mentor

Emerging Clinician Researcher Fellowship applicants must nominate at least one research mentor. A research mentor is a person who has significant experience and track record in the conduct of research relevant to the applicant's proposed research project. Research Mentors must meet the eligibility requirements for the TAAHC Clinician Researcher Experienced Fellow category (but are not required to be applicants to this scheme). The research mentor is expected to provide active management and guidance through all stages of the Fellowship

## 2.6 Funding Use

Funding may be used for the following:

- Fellow salary costs, including standard on-costs (leave loading, superannuation contributions, worker's compensation contributions and payroll tax). The Fellow's total salary (drawn from all sources) is not to exceed the salary the Fellow would have received in their substantive clinical position, i.e. the Fellow cannot use Fellowship funds to pay for a stipend that increases their substantive clinical position salary.
- Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the commencement of the Fellowship can be claimed.

Items not eligible for funding include:

- Institution on-costs above standard salary on-costs
- Institutional overheads and operational costs, including general facility and accommodation related costs
- Salary costs related to the non-Fellowship activities of the Fellow
- Project costs
- Travel costs
- Equipment costs

## 2.7 Funding Administration and Conditions

- Successful Fellows must confirm a Lead Organisation to which the funding is paid. This must be their employing organisation.
- Successful Fellows must reside in the TAAHC region for the duration of the Fellowship and the Fellowship research must be conducted in the TAAHC region.
- Fellows must retain employment at a TAAHC Hospital and Health Service Member for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Fellowships are awarded to develop the careers of specific individuals and are not transferable.
- Applicants and successful Fellows may apply or hold other grants outside of this scheme, as allowable by the relevant granting body. However, the other grants must not impact the Fellow's time commitment on the TAAHC Clinician Researcher Fellowship Scheme.
- Fellowships must be completed within the nominated 3-12 month duration period. No additional funds will be provided by TAAHC.
- An estimated commencement date should be provided in the application form, with the actual commencement date to be confirmed in the application is successful.
- Costs incurred before the Fellowship commences will not be reimbursed.

- A Fellowship must commence within 3 months of the Research Contract being signed. If these timeframes are not met, TAAHC has the right to withdraw the Fellowship offer.

## 2.8 Reporting

- The Lead Organisation will be required to report to TAAHC on the progress of the Fellowship research and the use of Fellowship funds.
- The Lead Organisation must complete and submit to TAAHC a Scientific Progress Report. This report must be submitted no later than 6 weeks from the completion of the first 50% of the Fellowship (the halfway mark of the Fellowship) e.g. the scientific progress report for a 12 month Fellowship commencing 1 January 2021 will be due 10 August 2021.
- A Final Scientific Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 6 weeks of completion of the Fellowship.
- A Final Financial Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 3 months of completion of the Fellowship.
- TAAHC will provide 80% of the Fellowship funds upon execution of the relevant Research Contract and the remaining 20% of the funds upon submission and acceptance of a Final Scientific Report.
- If the Lead Organisation fails to submit the Final Scientific Report or Scientific Progress Report, or if in TAAHC's opinion, acting reasonably, the Fellow has not made satisfactory progress on the Fellowship research, TAAHC may withhold final payment or seek repayment of Fellowship funds paid to date.
- These requirements will be outlined in the relevant Research Contract between TAAHC and the Lead Organisation.

## 3 Application Process

It is the Lead Organisation and applicant's responsibility to read and familiarise themselves with these Funding Rules and all other documents referred to within these Funding Rules.

Applications must be submitted through the [SmartyGrants Portal](#) by **5pm Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021**. Setting up a SmartyGrants account is free and previous SmartyGrants users can use the same account.

Late applications will not be accepted.

### 3.1 Letters of Support

The application must include a letter of support from the Lead Organisation. The letter of support must include:

- Support for the application, including the nominated FTE to be dedicated to the Fellowship and the requested salary dollar value to cover the nominated FTE, having considered employment arrangements and implications for service delivery;
- An outline of the clinical/health challenges of the organisation and their alignment with the proposed fellowship and fellowship research activities;
- The signature of the relevant person with appropriate authority to support the application and any commitments. This will most likely be the applicant's immediate line manager of unit/department head. The letter must be formatted Lead Organisation letterhead.

Failure to comply with the letter of support requirements will make an application ineligible.

## 4 Assessment process

The applications will be assessed by TAAHC representatives for completeness and eligibility. TAAHC reserves the right to remove applications that are incomplete, ineligible, not in keeping with the Funding Rules or clearly non-competitive, and to provide preliminary advice to the review panel. Exclusion of applications may take place at any time during the selection process.

Applications will be assessed under a competitive merit-based process against selection criteria by a review panel, which will provide recommendations on Fellowship award recipients to the TAAHC Board of Directors. The TAAHC Board of Directors has absolute discretion in making the final decision on awarding recipients.

TAAHC will advise each applicant in writing of the outcome of their application. No information will be released verbally.

Application outcomes are final. TAAHC will not enter into any oral or written correspondence about selection decisions.

### 4.1 Review Panel

The review panel will include the following:

- Researchers and senior clinicians from the TAAHC Founding Members;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives;
- Other researchers and senior clinicians with relevant expertise, as identified by TAAHC.

### 4.2 Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will guide the assessment:

Selection Criteria	Weighting
<b>1. Applicant Track Record and Potential</b>	
Strength of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research outputs (publications, grants, invited speaker, awards and prizes, patents, supervision and mentoring)</li><li>• Clinical/health/community/population impact of previous research (contributions to improved clinical practice, policy change and/or better health outcomes)</li><li>• Research mentoring activities (Experienced Fellowship applicants only)</li></ul>	30%
Clinical research career vision and development plans for next four years	10%
<b>2. Research Project and Plan</b>	
Alignment with TAAHC Research Themes	20%

Potential for the Fellowship project to impact policy and practice for better, more equitable health outcomes and improved service delivery for northern Queensland	20%
Innovation, quality, feasibility of research project	20%

*National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*

Applications that specifically relate to the health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples or include distinct Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data will be required to address, and will be assessed against the following NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria. To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Community engagement - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.	25%
Benefit - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important public health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.	25%
Sustainability and transferability - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.	25%
Building capability - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.	25%

### 4.3 Career disruption

A career disruption is considered to be a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy and childbirth, major illness and carer responsibilities (including parental leave). The period of career disruption may be used to determine eligibility and to allow for inclusion of additional track record information for assessment purposes. Where relevant, applicants should disclose periods of career disruption of 3 months or more over the last five years and provide a brief explanation of the reason in their application.

#### 4.4 Relative to opportunity

Applications will be assessed 'relative to opportunity', considering an applicant's track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including whether productivity and contributions are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant.

#### 4.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

TAAHC will use the supplied application information for the purposes of assessing Fellowship applications. All information provided during the application process is received and accepted by TAAHC in confidence.

Information comprising the names of successful Fellows and their Lead Organisation, funding awarded and area of research may be made publicly available by TAAHC, including being made available on the TAAHC website. Details of unsuccessful applicants will remain confidential.

### 5 Contractual Arrangements

The Lead Organisation and TAAHC do not enter into a binding legal relationship unless and until a subsequent Research Contract is executed between TAAHC and the Lead Organisation.

The Fellowship is offered in accordance with the conditions specified in the Research Contract, which is an agreement between the Lead Organisation and TAAHC.

In signing the Research Contract, all parties agree to the conditions contained in the Research Contract and Schedules, including that research complies with relevant laws, guidelines and statements.

#### 5.1 Dissemination and Publicity

Successful Fellows must acknowledge the TAAHC funding in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Successful Fellows should provide broad Fellowship information as required by TAAHC to support any public announcements or promotional activity and attend media/promotion events if requested.

Fellows must not make any public announcement of advertisement in any medium in relation to the application process or outcome without the prior written approval of TAAHC.

At the conclusion of the Fellowship, Fellows will be asked to provide information on the impact and outcomes of their Fellowship, in a format specified by TAAHC, for use by TAAHC in promotional and marketing activities.

### 6 Further information

Further information or specific queries regarding the Clinician Researcher Fellowship Scheme should be directed to:

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Phone: (07) 4781 5036

Email: [taahc@jcu.edu.au](mailto:taahc@jcu.edu.au)