

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Research Assistance Scheme 2021

Funding Rules



Tropical
Australian
Academic
Health
Centre

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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 Research Assistance 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 Research Assistance Scheme

The Research Assistance scheme delivers on the aims of the TAAHC 2019-2022 Research Strategy to:

- 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 Research Assistance Scheme is intended to support researchers by providing access to assistance to undertake a specific project or program of research. The scheme recognises that researchers often require access to people with skills in areas such as data entry, management of ethics and governance applications and preparation of grant applications to undertake their research. The Research Assistance scheme funding will be used to engage a person or persons with specific research support skills required to undertake a specific project or program of research.

The objectives of the scheme are to:

1. 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.
2. Develop TAAHC clinicians and researchers and build their capacity to undertake high-quality translational research

2.1 Funding

TAAHC has made up to \$130,000 available in 2021 to the Research Assistance scheme.

Applicants may seek funding to engage a Research Assistant for a maximum of 12 months to support a research project or program that aligns 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.

Funding will be provided to a recipient organisation (Lead Organisation) for the engagement of a Research Assistant. Note that one Research Assistant may be engaged to assist with multiple projects.

2.2 Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- An applicant may only be funded for research assistance once in a calendar year;
- The applicant must hold an appointment with a TAAHC Founding Member or a general practice provider in the TAAHC region;
- Applicants may not request funding for a project or program that is funded by an organisation where research assistance costs are eligible costs. In most instances, projects funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Research Council and other health focused funding organisations will be ineligible to receive TAAHC Research Assistance funding;
- TAAHC will not duplicate funding for research assistance that has been provided from any other funding source.
- Investigators may hold up to two active projects funded by TAAHC across its funding schemes (Research Assistance, Micro-Funding, Seed Funding, Clinician Researcher Fellowship).

2.3 Funding Use

Funding may be used for the following:

- Salary costs for dedicated research/technical staff to support the project.

Items not eligible for funding include:

- Salary costs for Investigative Team Members;
- Conference or event travel;
- Costs directly related to the proposed project, including, equipment, consumables and travel
- Infrastructure Costs for basic facilities such as:
 - Accommodation (e.g. laboratory and office);
 - Access to a basic library collection;
 - Standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services;
 - Provision of computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialised applications) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software; and
 - Use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.

2.4 Funding Administration and Conditions

- Applicants must confirm a Lead Organisation. This will most likely be the employing institute of the Lead Investigator. The Lead Organisation will be responsible for ensuring that all obligations of the Research Assistance scheme are met.
- Research Assistance is awarded to support a specific Project or Program and is not transferable.
- Applicants may apply or hold other grants outside of this scheme, as allowable by the relevant granting body. However, the other grants must not duplicate funding for the Research Assistance Scheme.
- Research Assistance funding is non-renewable and the duration of engagement of a research assistant must not exceed 12 months. 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 if the application is successful.
- Costs incurred before the Research Assistance funding commences will not be reimbursed.
- A Research Assistant must commence within 3 months of the Research Contract being signed. If these timeframes are not met, TAAHC has the right to withdraw the Research Assistance scheme funding offer.

3 Application Process

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

Applications to the Research Assistance scheme will be via an Expression of Interest. Those applicants successful in their Expression of Interest will enter into negotiation with TAAHC regarding the selection, duration, location, engagement and appointment of a suitable Research Assistant. TAAHC may direct applicants to utilise the same Research Assistant for multiple projects or programs.

Applications must be submitted through the [SmartyGrants Portal](#) by **5pm Wednesday 30th June 2021**. Setting up a SmartyGrants account is free and previous SmartyGrants users can use the same account.

Late applications will not be accepted.

4 Assessment process

The Expressions of Interest will be assessed by TAAHC representatives for completeness and eligibility. TAAHC reserves the right to remove Expressions of Interest 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 Expressions of Interest 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 funding recipients to the TAAHC Board of Directors.

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.

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 Expression of Interest. 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 Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will guide the assessment:

Selection Criteria	Weighting
Alignment with TAAHC Research Themes	25%
Potential for the Project to impact policy and practice for better, more equitable health outcomes and improved service delivery for northern Queensland	25%
Innovation, quality and feasibility of research project	25%
Demonstrated need for research assistance that cannot be reasonably procured from other sources	25%

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 and/or participants must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Selection Criteria	Weighting
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%

4.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

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

Information comprising the names of successful Applicants 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 Research Assistance funding 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 Applicants must acknowledge the TAAHC funding in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Successful Applicants should provide general information regarding the funded project or program as required by TAAHC to support any public announcements or promotional activity and attend media/promotion events if requested.

Applicants 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 funding, recipients will be asked to provide information on the impact and outcomes of the funding, 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 Research Assistance Scheme should be directed to:

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Phone: (07) 4781 5036

Email: taahc@jcu.edu.au