

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Seed Funding 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 Seed Funding 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 Seed Funding Scheme

The Seed Funding scheme delivers on the aim of the TAAHC 2019-2022 Research Strategy to:

- 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
- Enhance collaboration and partnership

The Seed Funding Scheme is intended to support translational research projects that address TAAHC strategic research priorities and that demonstrate the potential to develop into significant programs of work capable of accessing external funding sources.

The scheme recognises that collaboration and partnership between clinicians, researchers and consumers is critical to establishing high-level research programs that can translate research outcomes into policy and practice. The scheme provides seed funding to establish collaborative, high-level research programs that can attract external research funding and deliver improvements in equity and health outcomes to northern Queensland communities.

The objectives of the program 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. Enhance the capacity of TAAHC to attract external research investment
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

Seed Funding will be provided for projects of up to \$50,000 for a maximum duration of two years.

2.2 Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- The Project research must be conducted in the TAAHC region;
- The Project must be a collaboration between two or more TAAHC Founding Members or a collaboration between one or more TAAHC Founding Members and a General Practice provider in the TAAHC region i.e. the Investigative Team must consist of at least two individuals, one of which is affiliated with a TAAHC Founding Member and one who is affiliated with a TAAHC Founding Member or a General Practice provider in the TAAHC region;
- The Lead Investigator's substantive affiliation must be with a TAAHC Founding Member or General Practice provider in the TAAHC region;
- The Lead Investigator must continue to be employed, reside and conduct research in northern Queensland for the duration of the Seed Funding;
- A Project Team (i.e. those investigators listed under 'Applicant Details' in the Seed Funding Application) can only apply for and receive a maximum of two applications for Seed Funding in any one round;
- An individual may be listed as an Investigator on up to four Seed Funding applications in any one round
- 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:

- Costs directly related to the proposed project, including research assistance, equipment, consumables and travel.
- 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.
- 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

- Successful 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 Project obligations are met.
- The Project research must be conducted in the TAAHC region

- Seed Funding is awarded to support a specific Project 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 Seed Funding Project.
- Seed Funding is non-renewable and Projects must be completed within a maximum of two years. 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 Seed Funding commences will not be reimbursed.
- A Project must commence within 3 months of the Research Contract being signed. If these timeframes are not met, TAAHC has the right to withdraw the Seed Funding offer.

2.5 Reporting

- The Lead Organisation will be required to report to TAAHC on the progress of the Seed Funding Project and the use of Seed 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 Project (the halfway mark of the Project) e.g. the scientific progress report for a two year Project commencing 1 January 2020 will be due 11 February 2021.
- A Final Scientific Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 6 weeks of completion of the Project.
- A Final Financial Report must be completed and submitted to TAAHC within 3 months of completion of the project.
- TAAHC will provide 80% of the Seed Funding 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, satisfactory progress on completing the Project has not been made, 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 Organisations 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 15th September 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 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. The review panel will provide a recommendation on Seed Funding 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.

4.2 Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will guide the assessment:

Selection Criteria	Weighting
Alignment with TAAHC Research Themes	20%
Potential to impact policy and practice for better, more equitable health outcomes and improved service delivery for Northern Queensland	20%
Innovation, quality and feasibility of the research project	20%
Track record and quality of the team (does the team have the expertise, diversity and networks required to undertake the project)	20%
Potential of the Project to generate quality pilot data to leverage a successful future research funding application	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 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%

4.3 Confidentiality and Privacy

TAAHC will use the supplied application information for the purposes of assessing Seed Funding 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 Seed 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 broad Seed Funding Project information 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 Project, recipients will be asked to provide information on the impact and outcomes of their Project, 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 Seed Funding Scheme should be directed to:

Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre

Phone: (07) 4781 5036

Email: taahc@jcu.edu.au