

HCF

THE HCF HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

POLICY AND GUIDELINES

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1. INTRODUCTION

In June, 2000 The Hospitals Contribution Fund of Australia (HCF) established The HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation as a not for profit charitable trust.

The Foundation is a not-for-profit charitable trust established to encourage health service research by Australian researchers for the benefit of HCF contributors and the Australian public generally.

Health services research examines how people get access to health care, how much health care costs, and what happens to patients as a result of this care. The Foundation considers the main goals of health services research are to identify the most effective ways to organize, manage, finance, and deliver high quality care; reduce medical errors; and improve patient safety.

1.1. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Foundation is administered through a Board of Trustees, which currently comprises:

Mrs L J Stone
Mr R J Goaley
Ms M E Rummery
Mr R J Schneider
Mr G W Wright
Dr S M Larkin

Mr I McDonald (Secretary)
Mrs S Jack (Accountant)
Dr Karen Beatty (Manager)

An Assessment Sub-committee will be appointed from the above, the HCF Medical Director, and other persons as required.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the HCF Foundation health services research programme are to assist the improvement of prevention, treatment and cure of diseases in the general community by:

- a) Funding both primary and translational research depending on the availability of existing research and the most appropriate way of responding to important knowledge gaps;
- b) Funding all types of study proposals expected to enhance knowledge and understanding in the field of health services research;
- c) Encouraging the production of rigorous and relevant evidence regarding use, costs, quality, access, planning and organization, financing, and outcomes of service that will lead to improvements in health and health services; and
- d) Funding research addressing a broad range of aspects of the quality of services: access and equity in provision, relevance and appropriateness to the needs of individuals and communities, effectiveness and efficiency, how services are experienced.

The Foundation's research programme will therefore clearly address the main dimensions of the Australian health system that are of concern to HCF, the Foundation and the community at large: achieving better health outcomes and access to affordable, high quality health care when needed.

Research must be designed to provide information that can be applied. The transmission of the results to HCF are important components of this research program.

2. PRIORITY AREAS

The HCF Foundation prioritises projects in applied or experimental research in the area of health services research. Research which are translatable into practice and that will positively affect the health and wellbeing of the Australian population is most highly valued.

The following socioeconomic objective areas within the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Categories (ANZSRC) will be considered:

Division 92: Health

Group 9202 Health and Support Services

- 920201 Allied Health Therapies (excl. Mental Health Services)
- 920202 Carer Health
- 920203 Diagnostic Methods
- 920204 Evaluation of Health Outcomes
- 920205 Health Education and Promotion
- 920206 Health Inequalities
- 920207 Health Policy Economic Outcomes
- 920208 Health Policy Evaluation
- 920209 Mental Health Services
- 920210 Nursing
- 920211 Palliative Care
- 920299 Health and Support Services not elsewhere classified

9204 Public Health

- 920401 Behaviour and Health
- 920402 Dental Health
- 920403 Disability and Functional Capacity
- 920404 Disease Distribution and Transmission (incl. Surveillance and Response)
- 920405 Environmental Health
- 920406 Food Safety
- 920407 Health Protection and/or Disaster Response
- 920408 Health Status (e.g. Indicators of Well-Being)
- 920409 Injury Control
- 920410 Mental Health
- 920411 Nutrition
- 920412 Preventive Medicine
- 920413 Social Structure and Health
- 920414 Substance Abuse
- 920499 Public Health (excl. Specific Population Health) not elsewhere classified

Projects addressing this area of research will be given priority when applications for funding are considered.

Further details on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/CF7ADB06FA2DFD69CA2574180004CB82?opendocument>

3. PROJECT FUNDING

The Board of Trustees, when determining funding for projects, will consider the following categories within an application as fundable:

3.1. EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Hourly rates of pay will be determined from the relevant Award Rates of pay for administrative and technical support.

3.2. TRAVEL

Contribution towards travel will hinge on the nature of the project. In general, funds for travel will only be considered when they form an integral part of the project, i.e. data collection. Mode of travel must be indicated.

3.3. MEALS AND ACCOMMODATION

Claims for meals and accommodation will be approved under the present funding structure provided they form part of the project. They will not be allowed in the resident work setting.

3.4. TECHNICAL SERVICES AND SUPPLIES

3.4.1. COMPUTER SERVICES

Reasonable expenses for computer services, or purchase of software is permitted. Budgets must include information of the facility to be used, rates per hour, and number of hours required. Generally the purchase of hardware is not allowed.

3.4.2. EQUIPMENT

In general, funding will not be provided for equipment. However, the purchase of items specifically required for the project may be allowed if such items are normally not available and deemed essential. Any equipment so purchased will remain the property of the institution. Where expensive equipment owned by the institution will be used to carry out the research, maintenance costs for such equipment may be permitted.

3.4.3. CONSUMABLES

Funds may be provided for laboratory supplies such as films, gases, etc.

4. APPLICATIONS

4.1. GENERAL APPLICATIONS

These will be accepted from interested researchers after a call for applications. The HCF Foundation will seek applications from interested parties and may advertise specific topics deemed priorities in keeping with the Mission and Objectives. There are no express time periods when HCF will make call for applications.

4.2. COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

Researchers with a demonstrated interest, expertise and a proven track record in health services research may be invited by The HCF Foundation to submit a proposal.

4.3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Expressions of interest (EOI) will be accepted after a published call for submission by The HCF Foundation. Calls for submissions will be advertised on the Foundation website as well as in the higher education supplement of The Australian newspaper.
- Full applications will be invited after consideration of EOI's.
- EOI and full application forms may be obtained from the Manager, HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation or downloaded from <http://www.hcf.com.au/Info/AboutUs/HCF-Foundation/>. The forms are in excel format and are available for both excel 2003 and excel 2007.
- Applications must be completed in English in the Excel spreadsheet.
- Applications must be submitted electronically via email as well as a hard copy via post.
- Relevant supporting information may be included (for the electronic submission, please scan documents and send with the application). Supporting documentation received after the application will not be included with the application unless it has been specifically requested by The Foundation.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.
- One copy of the final clearance from the Ethical Committee of the administering institution must be attached to the original application form, or forwarded as soon as possible thereafter. No funding will be finalised without evidence of ethics approval or argument justifying why ethics approval was not sought.
- Electronic and hard copies must both be received by the submission date to be considered. No extensions will be given.
- Word count limits must be strictly adhered to. Fields will be cut off at the indicated limit when being imported into the Foundations database. The Foundation reserves the right to not process any application that does not comply with stated limits.
- No part of applications will be returned to the applicant.
- Applicants must provide reviewers with a copy of the application and the referee form, which can be downloaded from <http://www.hcf.com.au/Info/AboutUs/HCF-Foundation/>, for completion.

5. SELECTION PROCESS

5.1. PRELIMINARY REVIEW

The HCF Foundation will conduct a preliminary review of all applications to determine those which fall within the guidelines and which will provide significant practical benefits for the Australian community.

5.2. SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

The Assessment Sub-committee members will review the selected applications. They will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- demonstrated depth of insight into the problem
- scientific merit, design and methodology of the project
- feasibility of the study
- appropriateness of the budget
- potential of the research results to be readily applied
- external assessment to be used when required

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Assessment Sub-committee will be reviewed by the full Board of Trustees prior to a final recommendation being made. Final recommendations will be based upon:

- the direct benefit to the Australian community
- the scientific review
- the available budget

The HCF Foundation will have final approval of funding of recommended projects. Priority may be given to those topics commissioned by The HCF Foundation.

6. POST-DECISION PROCESS

6.1. NOTIFICATION

Once The HCF Foundation has approved funding, applicants will be notified of decisions regarding funding by The HCF Foundation.

6.2. RESEARCH AGREEMENT

A agreement will be executed between The HCF Foundation, the principal researcher and the administering institution. The agreement will detail payment structures.

6.3. NO APPEALS

The HCF Foundation is committed to the fair and equitable exercise of its powers. The decisions of The HCF Foundation regarding approval of funding will be final and no correspondence will be entered into with unsuccessful applicants.

7. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RESEARCHER

7.1. RESEARCH GRANT AGREEMENT

The principal researcher is responsible for ensuring that any organisations involved have read and have no objections to signing the draft research agreement which is available on The HCF Foundation website.

Delays to receipt by The HCF Foundation of signed research agreements may result in delays in payment of funds.

7.2. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports must accompany each invoice. The progress report form is formatted in excel and will be provided to researchers when grants have been approved.

7.3. COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

Subject to HCF Foundation approval satisfactory completion of the project will be determined by:

- the scientific report being favourably viewed by the Trustees
- a satisfactory audited statement from the researcher or the administering institution being received by The HCF Foundation

7.3.1. REPORTS

A final scientific report documenting research objectives, methodology, and findings is required for all HCF Foundation grant recipients. The purpose of this report is to describe the research activities and outcomes supported by the grant. One hard copy of the report is required as well as electronic submission. A cover sheet in excel format is also required.

The report is expected to include the following headings:

- Lay summary (single paragraph)
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions
- Translation of results
- Publications and presentations

7.4. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Unless otherwise specified in annexure "A" or agreed in writing by the Parties, the Foundation acknowledges that the Intellectual Property Rights in the programs, software, processes, solutions or other material relating to the Research provided by the Researcher remain the property of the Researcher.

7.5. OTHER

The principal researcher will inform The Foundation of any publications or media coverage arising from the project.

8. WHERE TO APPLY

All applications should be sent to:

Hard copies

The Secretary
HCF Health and Medical Research Foundation
c/- The Hospitals Contribution Fund of Australia Limited
GPO Box 4242
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Electronic submission

hcf_foundation@hcf.com.au

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information requested in an application will be used for the purpose of assessing that application and, in a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for HCF Foundation statistical purposes. The HCF Foundation undertakes to store all applications in a secure place and to destroy declined applications after due process to preserve confidentiality.

The HCF Foundation may seek reports from referees, where appropriate, to assess the scientific merit of the application. Personal information contained in the application may be made available to external referees and members of The HCF Foundation Committees relevant to the review of the application.

In the event that an application is successful, The HCF Foundation reserves the right to release applicants' names, details of the host institution, project title, lay summaries and funding awarded for public interest purposes.

10. CONCLUSION

The HCF Foundation supports and encourages research that will make a direct contribution to the health of all Australians. It is envisaged that much of the information gained through this program will be applicable at many levels of the Australian health system, public and private.

11. CHECKLIST

Application form:	
All fields (sections A-F) complete	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference number is on A – General information page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Page A and page B signed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total amount requested is correct on page A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hard copy of application is preferably double sided and is not stapled.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic copy is named with the reference number and is in .xls or .xlsm format.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethics clearance attached	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any supporting information is attached.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Grant Agreement has been reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>