



Toowoomba Hospital Foundation & Pure Land Learning College 2024 Research Grants

Application Guideline

Background:

The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation invites applications for the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation & Pure Land Learning College Research Grants. The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation aims through this invitation to promote and encourage research activity within Darling Downs Health. There are two rounds of grants each year.

Categories of Funding:

The grants are awarded in two categories; Novice (up to the value of \$20,000) and Experienced (up to the value of \$50,000). The Committee will treat Novice applications more favourably and with more discretion than applications for larger amounts in the Experienced category.

Policy, Pre-requisites for Funding:

1. The grants are open to employees of Darling Downs Health across all facilities. Principal Investigators must be full-time, part-time or visiting appointees to Darling Downs Health, whose research directly affects a health issue of major significance to the residents of the Darling Downs. If the Principal Investigator ceases employment at Darling Downs Health during the period of funding, the project is to be transferred to another Darling Downs Health Investigator as funding remains with the Health Service.
2. Applications for financial support for employees doing post graduate studies (i.e. PhD's) for what would normally be expected to be provided by the higher education student themselves will not be supported.
3. Grants must be administered through a designated research cost centre/internal order number with Darling Downs Health, in accordance with the Queensland Health Research Management Policy. Collaborating organisations/institutions can receive up to a limit of 25% of the grant funding allocated to the project.

4. The Research Grants Committee assesses applications received. The Committee may seek opinions from outside experts in the field of applicable research. The Committee makes recommendations to the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation Board.
5. Funding may be made for the total project or as a grant-in-aid and will usually be provided for equipment, consumables and/or salaries for research personnel. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) equipment purchases (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.) will not generally be supported. In the event that they are supported, the relevant Darling Downs Health Policy and Procedures for approval and purchase of this equipment must be complied with.
6. All equipment purchased by way of a Toowoomba Hospital Foundation Research Grant is to remain the property of Darling Downs Health. This equipment will be available for the use of the investigators during the approved term of the project.
7. Projects must have the approval of a NHMRC certified Health Human Research Ethics Committee or waiver of requirement of ethical approval prior to consideration by the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation Research Grants Committee. Further to this, each ethics Committee application can only be associated with one successful application through the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation Pure Land Learning College Research Grants.
8. Funding is intended to be seed funding for research projects and/or service evaluations. Studies will not be funded more than once except in exceptional circumstances.
9. Applicants must provide a detailed risk assessment which outlines:
 - a) identified risks that prompted this research and/or service evaluation to be proposed.
 - b) potential risk to Darling Downs Health or the population under study should this research and/or service evaluation not proceed.
 - c) adjusted risk assessment on completion of the project.
10. There should be no significant risk to Darling Downs Health should the research and/or service evaluation proceed.
11. Successful applicants will be expected to submit results of their research for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. All publications and presentations should acknowledge the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation as the funding source. The Foundation is to be provided with reprints of any article or abstract accepted for publication. Service evaluations will be expected to be able to inform service decision making processes and test models of care. A written article suitable for presentation to the THF Committee and Darling Downs Health Board would be expected at the end of the project.
12. The successful research applicant/s must provide a full scientific report of their work at the expiration of the grant, and an interim report at the end of each twelve-month period if the grant is held for a period longer than twelve months. Expenditure Statements will be required at the same intervals and be subject to Audit.
13. A summary of the results of the research in **lay language suitable for inclusion in Toowoomba Hospital Foundation publications and for release to the media** is to be provided at the expiration of the grant.

14. Projects should be able to be completed within a two year period. Funding will be for a maximum of two years.
15. Proposals must meet the objectives of the Foundation as defined under the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation charter.
16. Proposals are for one-off funding and not for operational or recurrent costs.
17. Grants will be awarded on the basis of merit of both the applicant and the proposed research.
18. Projects requesting seed funding as part of a planned approach towards an application for an external peer reviewed grant (from NHMRC, QNC or similar body) will be favourably considered.
19. Projects which are part of the planned development of a research program within Darling Downs Health or which will lead to the development of research expertise within Darling Downs and Health will also be considered favourably.

Assessment

Grant applications will be assessed by a Committee established for this purpose. The Committee normally shall be comprised of:

- a) The Chair of the Committee who shall be independent and not an employee of Darling Downs Health;
- b) Two lay people (one male and one female);
- c) Two experienced researchers from outside Darling Downs Health;
- d) Two other people nominated by the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation (one medical, one nursing); and
- e) The Chair of the Darling Downs Health Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Committee:

- may, at its discretion, seek reports from external referees;
- will review the project applications to determine a shortlist; and
- may interview short-listed applicants.

Assessment Criteria:

Applications will be assessed for the merit of the proposed research and the track record of the investigators, with specific attention to the following areas:

1. **Significance:** The extent to which the project, if successfully carried out will make an original and important contribution to clinical practice or health service delivery within Darling Downs Health.
2. **Approach:** The extent to which the conceptual framework, design (including where applicable, the selection of appropriate participant populations), methods and analyses are properly developed, well-integrated and appropriate to the aims of the project.
3. **Feasibility:** The likelihood that the proposed work can be accomplished by the investigators, within the specified time frame.
4. **Track Record:** The recent track record of the applicants based on:

- a) their productivity and the factors which may have either enhanced or inhibited it; and
- b) the quality of publications and the standing of the journals in which the applicants have recently published.

Where the application is in the novice researcher category, the track record of the research mentor will be taken into consideration.

- 5. **Applicability / Risk Assessment:** The relevance of this project to the research activities of Darling Downs Health. Specific consideration should be given to identified risks which the application addresses. Identification of potential risks associated with this project, be they financial, workforce or operational, that are of particular concern to Darling Downs Health, and how they will be managed, will also be taken into consideration.
- 6. **Budget:** The amount requested being reasonable and adequate.

Please note: The scoring system used by the Committee is a guide which may be called upon to differentiate between studies when funding is limited. Other objective factors can be used by the Committee when making their final recommendations.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are advised to read this guide carefully before preparing and submitting their application. Please ensure that all information contained in the application is correct at the time of submission.

An online application form submission must be submitted by no later than close of business on the date listed on the form.

[Link to online application form](#)

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Confidentiality

All applications submitted to the Foundation are treated in confidence and are not public documents. Details of unsuccessful applications are kept confidential.

All relevant documents are handled in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 which sets standards for collecting, storing, using and disclosing, and assessing, personal information. They are also subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and are available by making a valid application in accordance with the Act.

Research grant documentation will be stored by the Research Grants Coordinator, in appropriate confidential storage on the Toowoomba Hospital campus.

1. Title and brief summary

Provide the title of the application.

2. Principal Investigator/Associate Investigators/Research Mentors

Please complete the required details for each investigator. Correspondence will be issued only to the Principal Investigator. If more “Other Investigators” are required than the form permits, please add the extra Investigator details as an attachment to the application form.

3. Expected Duration of the Project.

Detail the expected duration of the project in months. Note that the maximum time for funding is two years.

4. Collaborating Institutions

Funds must be administered through a Darling Downs Health Research Cost Centre/Internal Order Number in accordance with the Queensland Health Research Management Policy.

Where research will be carried out in conjunction with other institutions (eg. Universities), a percentage should be allocated to each institution and department involved in conducting the project to reflect the degree of sharing the research effort amongst the actual institutions/departments listed. Collaborating organisations/institutions can receive up to a limit of 25% of the grant funding allocated to the project.

5. Synopsis

Provide a summary of the aims, objectives and expected outcomes of this project.

6. Significance

Describe the extent to which the project, if successfully carried out, will make an original and important contribution to clinical practice or health service delivery within Darling Downs Health.

7. Project Plan

Summarise the background and research plan of your project. It should include the:

- Aim/s;
- Background / Literature Review;
- Details of the basic research strategy; and
- Study design.

Where applicable, include the sample size and statistical power, sampling methods, main variables to be measured/examined, instruments of measurement/observation and their validity, methods of data collection and analysis of data.

Where the project involves an intervention, describe the rationale for the intervention and how it will be evaluated. Also include rural/urban/remote spread and cultural influences/aspects where appropriate.

Please specify timelines or major time allocations.

8. Risk Assessment

Darling Downs Health is dedicated to ensuring risk management is an integral part of all activities. One of the fundamental concepts within Integrated Risk Management is the identification, analysis and evaluation of risks from across the spectrum to aid significantly in the development of effective and efficient management and mitigation strategies. The application of risk management will provide a systematic process to ensure that all internal systems promote evidence-based strategies thereby directed to deliver optimal outcomes in line with these strategic directions. The incorporation of risk assessment into the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation's application process for funding will ensure that the distribution of these funds are to those identified at risk patient populations, or problem areas, that have been generated through Darling Downs Health integrated risk management process.

Applicants must provide a detailed risk assessment which outlines the:

- identified risks that prompted this research to be proposed.
- potential risk to DDH or the population under study should this research not proceed.
- adjusted risk assessment on completion of the project.

Applicants should refer to the Risk Management resources available at - (<https://gheps.health.qld.gov.au/darlingdowns/legal-and-governance/risk-management>) when completing this section of their application.

9. Budget

A recommended budget may be determined by the Research Grants Committee after consideration of the requested budget. No additional funds will be provided during the life of the grant.

The grant must be completed within the two year timeframe. **Any unexpended funds must be refunded to the Foundation.**

a) Budget Items

A detailed budget work-up should be prepared in consultation with the Business Manager for the area in which the project will be undertaken. This should be prepared using the Queensland Health Costing Model & Instruction Manual. GST must be incorporated into the budget work-up.

The brief overview table is for the benefit of Committee Members in assessing your application. "In-kind" budget amounts which will be contributed by any of the collaborating institutions should be included.

i. Personnel

If staff (e.g. project officer) are required to carry out the project, this should be clearly indicated. Their level of qualification and salary should be identified and should be commensurate with the tasks required of them.

Please note: There is no GST included in payroll, this needs to be added on. If you are budgeting to cover labour cost, please include the total labour cost as per payroll advice + 10% GST.

Line items in the budget allocated for human resources will be closely scrutinised i.e. where possible research assistants are used in an effort to lower the cost of wages requested.

ii. Equipment and Consumables

Equipment necessary to the project should be specified and costed (where applicable, recent quotes from suppliers should be attached). The necessity for each item should be explained in the budget justification. Consumables will include items such as photocopying and stationery, postage.

All equipment purchased by way of Foundation funds, for an approved research project, is to remain the property of Darling Downs Health. The equipment will be available for the use of the Investigators during the approved term of the project. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) equipment purchases (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.) will NOT generally be supported. In the event that they are supported the relevant Darling Downs Health Policy and Procedures for approval and purchase of this equipment must be complied with.

iii. Travel

Travel should be justified and rates should be at current Queensland Health accommodation and daily rates.

iv. Statistical Analysis

It is strongly recommended that researchers seek statistical advice prior to submission of their application and consider the cost of any required statistical analysis. Please contact the DDH Research Fellow (Phone (07) 4699 8056 or DDHHSResearchSupport@health.qld.gov.au) who will provide advice on the statistical support that may be required for your study.

v. Journal Publications

Financial support for journal publications will be considered up to the value of \$3,000.00 per research grant.

b) Detailed Justification of Budget

Provide a detailed justification of the budget items listed in 9a.

c) Current projects related to this research

Detail any current projects in the same field of research.

d) Funds from other agencies

If the funding is only for part of the project or for a small study which is part of a larger work, it is essential that the applicant **clearly identify** the source or sources of funding for the rest of the project.

The Foundation would be disinclined to provide funding for what was clearly only part of a project unless there was a reasonable likelihood of the balance of funding necessary to carry out the project being forthcoming.

Minor changes, arising during the conduct of the research project, may be made to detailed budget allocations following application to the Chief Executive Officer of the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, through the Coordinator Research Grants; however no additional funds will be made available.

10. *Ethics Clearance Requirements*

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure approval is obtained from a Queensland Health Human Research Ethics Committee and that a copy of this approval is forwarded to the Research Grants Office.

Applications for funding will not be considered unless HREC ethical approval has been granted or a 'not requiring ethical approval' letter from a HREC Committee is enclosed. Each Ethics Committee application can only be associated with one successful grant application.

11. *Referees*

The external referees you name may be contacted by the Research Grants Committee. List only those referees that you believe are experts in the area of your research.

12. *Certification of Investigators, Line Managers and Research Mentors*

Certification is required from each of the Investigator(s), Line Manager(s) and Research Mentor(s). Please ensure that line managers of all areas involved in the research project have signed the application.

Final Comments

Because of the limited Foundation funds available, the number of applications worthy of support inevitably exceeds the money available for distribution. Whether successful or unsuccessful, applicants should retain a copy of the application for future reference. Writing a research application should be an ongoing process, with each stage planned well in advance. Each application, whether successful or not, can be thought about, built upon and incorporated into the next application, so that the application becomes stronger than the preceding one.

Successful applicants should pay particular attention to the terms and conditions of the award. These include the request for a report in lay language suitable for inclusion in the Foundation's publications, as well as the scientific report, at the end of the grant.

Ongoing approval and compliance with all conditions of approval from the approving Human Research Ethics Committee is required.

The Principal Investigator is obliged to notify the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation of any suspension/cancellation of any relevant approvals or change of circumstance that would affect the continuation/completion of the research project.

The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation reserves the right to suspend or cancel the payment of research grants and require monies already awarded to be forfeited when the Terms & Conditions of any grant made by the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation have not been fulfilled.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified after all successful applicants have formally accepted their grant.

The Foundation relies on donations from the community; the more the community knows and understands about the research work supported by these donations, the more likely it is that community support will be continued and increased.