

Clinical Academic Fellowship applications

Grant Writing Tips

Grant writing is a difficult process, especially for a clinical researcher who may have had minimal experience in writing academic research fellowship applications. Advice on the grant writing process can be obtained from many avenues – including an established research mentor.

The Office of Health and Medical Research has established the [Mentor Program](#), which endeavours to assist Queensland Health researchers to develop their careers in health and medical research. The program aims to link early career research mentees with established senior health and medical research mentors to assist in career planning and development, including grant writing.

1 Before you start

- The Clinical Academic Fellowship program has been designed to increase Queensland's research capacity, attract and retain skilled clinician researchers, and to encourage collaboration between Queensland publicly funded health care facilities and Queensland universities. Therefore, It is essential that each application has two separate applicants, and that joint applicants discuss and prepare the application together, and apply for the funding as collaborators.
- It is also essential that applicants follow the funding guidelines, and have the relevant delegate approve and sign off on the application. By signing the application, the relevant delegate agrees to provide the funding for the new position as stated in the application.
- Whilst some busy clinicians may have their grant applications written for them, it is essential that both the university and the Queensland Health applicant are aware that their name is on the application.
- Ensure that the application clearly demonstrates funding (either financial or in-kind support) from both the university and the Queensland Health facility, for the duration of the fellowship. It is also good to demonstrate to the panel that you have numerous avenues to seek further funding once OHMR's funding for the position has finished. A few examples of these are National Health Medical Research Council or other government funding bodies, or full/joint funding from either the university or the Queensland Health facility.
- Your Clinical Academic Fellowship application will be reviewed by established clinical research investigators and clinical academics, who are knowledgeable in a wide range of research areas. Consider the review panel to be 'informed strangers'. Your application should include enough detail to convince the review panel that both the research and health service duty components of your proposed position fill a substantial gap in clinical services and research.

- Ensure that the application for the position is competitive in terms of its likelihood of leading to a significant conceptual advance, important discovery or innovation, or the solution of an important clinical problem using scientific approaches.
- Ensure that you understand the current status in the field of research (both nationally and internationally) and are aware of the field's directions, knowledge gaps and how the proposed project aims to extend the field of knowledge.
- Ensure that the research augments the proposed clinical/health service duties and that the research will occur in a Queensland health facility, Queensland university or research centre.
- The proposed research should complement the current directives of Queensland Health. Information can be found at: [Research for a healthier future 2020: Health and Medical Research and Developmental Strategy](#) and [The Health of Queenslanders 2010: Third report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland](#).
- Ensure that the position you are proposing to create can be filled, and that you do not make the required qualifications and experience too specific. It would be advantageous to demonstrate in your application how to attend to find this person.

2 Content and Selection Criteria

- **Selection criterion 1:** Processes that will be put in place to ensure that the proposed position will demonstrate clinical excellence and leadership

Ensure that your answer is clear and concise and describes what processes you, as the joint applicants, and the health facility or university will put in place, if the position is established, to ensure that the position will demonstrate excellence and leadership in the chosen field. Make sure this is not too generic, and focuses on the clinical aspect of the position. When responding to this selection criterion, try to visualise what clinical tasks this new employee might do on their first day in this new position.

- **Selection criterion 2:** what steps will be put in place to ensure the proposed position will facilitate translation of research outcomes into clinical practice and better patient experiences

Ensure you demonstrate that the proposed position will have a positive impact on patients in Queensland. Also ensure that your research is able to be translated into new practices, therapies or processes. Try to include some tools, key performance indicators, milestones, or guidelines that will be put into practice if the position is established. Make sure that you demonstrate exactly what is being researched, and that your focus is not too narrow or broad.

- **Selection criterion 3:** what tasks the proposed position will undertake to support junior researchers and clinicians through education, training and mentorship

Map out and list what tasks the new employee will be undertaking to educate postgraduate students, mentor early career or junior researchers and clinicians. In this section show links with other facilities or schools that will be beneficial in teaching, fostering and mentoring researchers. Ensure that a mentor for this position is identified. Where possible include the mentor's qualifications, experience, track record in research, links and collaborations, as well as grant funding that this person has recently received.

- **Selection Criterion 4:** what environment will the academic work in to increase research capability in a health care related field.

Demonstrate to the panel that this position will build on what is already present, ensure that the research being conducted is new and innovative, and that there are sufficient support networks to help capacity build in the chosen field. Remember to focus on one field of research, and describe exactly what tasks the new employee will be undertaking.

- **Selection Criterion 5:** have or be capable of securing funding from external granting bodies and describe how the funding offered by the Fellowship will be supported by the joint applicants/institutions.

Clearly describe exactly how much funding will be given by each party, should the application be successful. Ensure that the funding is suitable, taking into consideration the level of the position to be created (i.e. only in-kind support from the university, and \$10,000 per annum from the health facility would not equal the salary of a senior professorial position). Also, list where you, as the applicants would be able to seek further funding from. As mentioned above, this can include Government grants, or ongoing joint funding.

- **Selection Criterion 6:** how the position will continue to be funded at the completion of the fellowship in five years. Describe how the proposed position will be established, and which party will take the lead in advertising and recruiting for the position.
- Describe in this section how funding for this position will be secured, describe how the joint applicants will seek any additional required funding during the fellowship. When describing how the position will be established, describe where the new employee would fit into the existing organisation chart (for both the university and the health service district), describe how the position would be advertised, selected, and recruited. In this section, also describe which facility will take the lead in advertising the position.

3 Before you submit

- Check to make sure that the application is easy for the reviewers to read by:
 - addressing each selection criteria to the best of your ability
 - using wording that is clear, concise and not overly verbose
 - defining any abbreviations and keeping the use of abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum
 - format the document as requested by the guidelines.
- Have your application reviewed by colleagues and friends. Request feedback into what they do not understand, what needs to be improved and whether they understand the importance of your work.

4 Interview Process

- Both the university and health facility applicants will be required to attend the interview. If your application reaches the interview stage of the selection process, you will be allowed to invite anyone you consider to be fundamental to the establishment of the position (this may include the positions mentor, a head of school, or Chief Executive Officer of the relevant health service district).
- Prior to the interview, anticipate general questions that the review panel may ask about your proposed joint position. If you are informed of who will be on the panel, consider how their clinical duties and/or research background will affect the types of questions they may ask.
- Plan and prepare responses for each of the selection criterion.

- Have multiple practice sessions with both research colleagues and friends to ensure you are confident when answering questions. This is also a good opportunity to identify potential weaknesses in your knowledge of the new position.
- Answer questions precisely and only provide information pertaining to the question. If there are any discrepancies, ask the panel to clarify.

5 In summary

- Be persistent and do not take an unsuccessful application personally. In general, only approximately ten per cent of applications are funded. In many cases, it was not that the review panel did not think any particular proposal lacked merit, only that the review panel was constrained by the amount of funding available.

6 Other resources

There are a number of other resources which may assist in providing advice on the grant writing process including:

- Curtin University – [Tips on writing a grant application](#).
- Science Hub Australia – [Tips on applying for ARC grants](#).
- Queensland University of Technology – [Writing Competitive Funding Applications](#).
- University of New England – [Tips on writing a successful grant application](#).
- [The Art of Grantmanship](#) by Jacob Kraicer.

7 University Grants team

Most universities had a dedicated research grants office to assist their university researchers in the grant application process. Many of these offices also provide grant writing workshops.

- Griffith University – Office for Research.
Tel: (07) 3735 4106 – Email: ore-grants@griffith.edu.au
- University of Queensland- Research and Innovation Division.
Tel: (07)3366 7920 – Email: grants-manager@research.uq.edu.au.
- Queensland University of Technology – Research Development Section, Office of Research
Tel: (07) 3138 4418 – Email: researchgrants@qut.edu.au

8 Contact

Research Programs Unit

The Office of Health and Medical Research

Tel: (07) 3405 6121 – Email: OHMR@health.qld.gov.au

9 Disclaimer

The writing tips are provided for advice ONLY. Check with current Clinical Academic Fellowship guidelines to ensure that your application meets the selection criteria. Following the advice in this document does not guarantee success in the Clinical Academic Fellowship application process.

Round Closed