



**RESEARCH FUNDING POLICY**

Physiotherapists Board  
of Queensland

**December 2008**



## Definitions

### **Agreement**

A binding contract between the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland, the Chief Investigator and the administering Institution outlining the terms and conditions of the research Grant and the rights and obligations of each party. The document must be signed by all parties and is enforceable by law.

### **applicant**

An applicant is an individual researcher or a team of researchers who have submitted an application for a Physiotherapists Board of Queensland research Grant.

### **application form**

The official Physiotherapists Board of Queensland application form for the current round of research Grants.

### **Chief Investigator**

The Chief Investigator is the person with primary responsibility for the management, reporting, and oversight of the project, and is either:

- the individual applicant; or
- where a research team applies, the person designated as Chief Investigator on the application form, who will be deemed to act on behalf of and with the agreement of the research team.

### **commencement date**

The commencement date is the date set out in the Agreement between the parties.

### **discrete project (or 'project')**

*A research project for which a "stand-alone" report can be written. This includes pilot studies, but does not include data collection or transcription in isolation.*

### **Grant**

The funding, supplied by the Board, for the project

### **mentor**

A mentor is a person who has experience in the development and implementation of research. The mentor is expected to assist and support the work of a researcher who has received a grant from the Board. The mentor is able to be a co-investigator with the researcher whose work they are supporting.

### **Research Sub-Committee**

A sub-committee of the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland



## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide advice to applicants to assist in the completion and submission of applications for Grants under the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland Research Funding Scheme.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *Physiotherapists Board of Queensland Research Funding Scheme Guidelines*, referred to herein as the 'Funding Guidelines'.

## Purpose

The Physiotherapists Board of Queensland (the Board) was established under the *Physiotherapists Registration Act 2001* to:

- protect the public by ensuring that health care is delivered in a professional, safe and competent way; and
- uphold the standards of practice within the profession; and
- maintain public confidence in the profession.

As a regulatory authority, the Board has a legislative responsibility to ensure that all physiotherapists in Queensland practise in a safe and competent manner. Under the Act, the Board is able to undertake research, relevant to the legislative scheme, into the regulation of the profession.

During the period 2008-2009, the Board's priority is to fund research that focuses on re-entry into the profession and recency of practice.

## Objectives

The objectives of this research funding are to:

- enhance health outcomes for the general public in Queensland by financially supporting research that focuses on clinical education of physiotherapists;
- promote innovative health care through evidence-based physiotherapy practice;
- provide a tangible example of the Board's commitment to excellence in corporate governance through open, accountable and equitable processes.

## Scope

Grants are awarded for research that is consistent with the current functions and objectives of the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland and enhance the practice of physiotherapy in Queensland.



At the beginning of each financial year, the Board will review its commitment to funding selected applicants for the purpose of undertaking research in an area of priority identified by the Board.

The Board will support research grants up to a maximum of **\$200,000**.

The Research Sub-Committee of the Board will direct the operation of the Research Funding Scheme.

Although not mandatory, the Board will consider favourably proposals that collaboratively seek to link with funding agents, such as National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) or Australian Research Council (ARC) and/or industry to expand or leverage the scope of the project.

### **Timeframe**

The applicants are notified of the results by 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009

The release of funds for the successful Grant applicant will occur by 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

The project is to have a completion date of no later than 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2010

### **Eligibility**

Grants are available to individuals or teams of researchers who are aligned to a recognized research institution in Australia for a specific project.

The Grant will be administered under the terms and conditions of the Research Grant Agreement.

- The Grant will support a discrete project which may or may not be a component of a larger study.
- Grants will be awarded for projects which have obtained, or are in the process of obtaining, ethics approval from all relevant authorities. (Full ethics approval **must** be obtained before any of the Grant is paid).
- Grants will not be awarded for projects which are more than 12 months in duration.
- Grants will not be awarded to projects which have been inadequately funded from elsewhere – the project must be for new work, though it may build on previous research.
- Where the Board considers that the applicant could benefit from the involvement of a mentor, the board will require the applicant to nominate a suitable mentor to oversee the project.



## **Conditions of Funding**

The Chief Investigator is accountable for the utilisation of the Grant, subject to the provisions of the Agreement.

The amount of Grant awarded for a project is final and no additional funds will be provided. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to determine whether any GST is payable for the project, and to include these costs in their submission.

Payment of the initial funding will be arranged at the commencement of the project once the Agreement has been signed by the relevant parties. Subsequent payments will be made on achievement of milestones and satisfactory reporting requirements as outlined in the Agreement.

The Grant must be spent on research in a way which benefits Queensland registrants and the Board expects that the Grant funds will be administered within Queensland wherever possible.

## **Use of Grant funds**

A Grant is awarded to the Chief Investigator for a specific discreet project. The Chief Investigator is accountable for the utilisation of these funds, subject to the following provisions (which may be subject to change at the time of the award but will be specified in the Agreement):-

- (a) Items of equipment purchased with Grant funds must be specified in the final report and ownership shall vest in such person or institution as may be nominated by the Executive Officer of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards.
- (b) Grant monies must not be used for those items set out above under 'Conflicts of interest – applicants'
- (c) The Grant amount is final and no additional funds will be provided.
- (d) Grant funds may be utilised for the purposes of attending conferences only where an investigator is disseminating the research findings of the project. A maximum of 5 per cent of the grant may be utilised for this purpose and should be specified in the budget. All other travel is to be specified in the budget and must be justified.

## **Disqualifications - Board members and employees**

Research teams must not include current members of the Board or Research Sub-Committee, or any Board employee as either Chief Investigator or a co-investigator.

An individual applicant or a mentor must not be a current member of the Board or Research Sub-Committee, or a Board employee.

## **Conflicts of interest – Board/ Research Sub-Committee members considering applications**

Under section 12 of the Registration Act, the Board must act independently, impartially and in the public interest.

Therefore any Board or Research Sub-Committee member who assesses applications, and has any form of conflict of interest in the application, may compromise section 12 unless the conflict is properly dealt with.

Section 35 of the Registration Act sets out how the Board must deal with conflicts of interest, which are defined as where the assessor has a direct or indirect interest in an issue being considered, or about to be considered, by the Board or Committee, and the interest could conflict with the proper performance of the person's duties about the consideration of the issue.

Essentially, conflicts of interest are dealt with by the conflicted party making full disclosure and stepping aside from assessing the application where required.

The Board's *Code of Conduct* should also be consulted if there are any doubts as to how a Board or Research Sub-Committee member should proceed.

## **Conflicts of interest – applicants**

As research undertaken with Grant monies is for the benefit of the profession, there will always be some indirect benefit flowing from the research results to the applicant. While this will not disqualify an application, the Board should not approve any funding which does not directly relate to the undertaking of research, such as:

- refurbishment, renovation or adaptation of a premises
- payment of basic services and utilities (including heating, lighting, rates and security) for a premises normally used by the researcher
- office furnishings
- rent or rates for a premises normally used by the researcher
- institutional administration charges
- reimbursement of previous expenditure in cases where projects have already commenced



- purchase of a premises, vehicle or capital equipment which will benefit the researcher after the project has been completed
- costs for facilities which the applicant normally has access
- childcare costs for applicant or team members

## Research Ethics

Funds will not be released until such time as the relevant ethical clearances have been received in full. **Provisional and/or short-term approvals not covering the full length of the project are not acceptable.**

Research is to comply with the national standards of the Australian Health Ethics Committee.

The offer of funding will be withdrawn if ethics approvals are not obtained by 29 May 2009 unless otherwise approved by the Board.

## The research project

Projects will be expected to be completed within their specified timeframe and any variations must have prior approval from the Research Sub-Committee. Applications for extensions must be sought in writing a minimum of three months prior to the end of the project. Applications for extensions received after the specified completion date may be in breach of the terms of the agreement, i.e. the recipient fails to perform, observe or fulfil any one or more of the covenants, obligations, requirements or provisions of the recipient expressed or implied in this agreement unless the non-performance or non-observance has been varied or excused by the Board in writing.

The Board reserves the right to reclaim a portion of the funds where projects are extended beyond six months of their original specified timeframe.

## Selection

The Board will make a final determination on the allocation of funds for Grants subject to the recommendation of the Research Sub-Committee.

Grants will only be awarded if the Board receiving proposals for research which it thinks are worth funding.

Where the Research Sub-Committee considers that they require further information or clarification in order to reach a decision they may call on applicants to attend a meeting. This will be at the applicant's expense and may be by teleconference if appropriate. The Research Sub-Committee may request information or clarification by the applicant in writing.

Grants are **not** available for retrospective funding.



## **Privacy & Confidentiality**

The Board is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality and security of personal information held in its databases. Information collected through the applications will be used only for the purposes of assessment, administration of the grant and maintaining contact with applicants.

However, the documents produced in processing the application or the application document itself can be the subject of an access request under the *Freedom of information Act 1992*.

## **Publicity and Dissemination of Results**

The Board attaches importance to the publication of the results of research undertaken with the assistance of a grant. Any publicity or publications resulting from funded research will be in accordance with the Agreement and will acknowledge the support of the Board.

However, the views expressed in research funded by the Board do not necessarily represent the views of its members, Executive or the staff of the Board.

The Board also requires a perpetual, royalty free licence to use the results of the research project or thesis produced for its internal activities e.g. publish an article in the Board's website or newsletter.

The Board will not publish the results of the research project or thesis until the Chief Investigator has first had the opportunity to publish in a forum of their choosing.

## **Assessment**

Applications will be assessed according to the standards set out below and the criteria set out in Attachment 1. Members of the Research Sub-Committee will assess each application against these.

Applications are assessed according to the following four Standards:

1. The research is relevant to the priority identified by the Board.
2. The research plan demonstrates and supports excellence in research.
3. The investigator(s) (and any mentor required by the Board) have the demonstrated track record of successful completion of research.
4. The budget and its administration to support the achievement of the proposed research.

Criteria used in the assessment process are identified in Attachment 1.



## **The applicant**

Applicants may hold other grants during the award period, but they must demonstrate that they will have adequate time and basic infrastructure resources to undertake the research within the context of their other work and/or professional responsibilities.

Except in extenuating circumstances, individual applicants or members of research teams who are unable to complete their projects within six months of their specified timeframes will not be eligible to apply for further grants for the following two years.

Where the applicant is a team of researchers, the entire team as so designated on the application form is considered as a whole. If circumstances arise where changes are made to the team membership, such changes must be presented in writing to, and be approved by, the Board within three months of the change occurring.

## **Notification process**

Following Board approval, the Executive Officer advises each applicant in writing of the outcome. No information is released over the telephone.

An offer of a Grant will have attached a copy of the agreement with the terms and conditions of the Grant. Applicants are to inform the Executive Officer in writing of their intention to agree to the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

Individual feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

## **Review of Decision**

Applicants may make a written submission to the Physiotherapists Board of Queensland concerning any aspect of their research grant application. The submission should:

- be addressed to the Executive Officer, Physiotherapists Board of Queensland;
- clearly outline all relevant details of the issue to be considered; and
- be received at the Office of Health Practitioners Registration Boards within 30 days of receiving notification of the issue to be considered.

## **Reporting**

### **Interim reporting requirements**

The Chief Investigator will be required to provide a list of achievements (expected and realised) with each interim and final report. These achievements could include data collection milestones, workshop presentations, papers submitted and conference abstracts. All interim reports must be submitted in hard copy using the provided Board interim report template and signed by the Chief Investigator.

Where the Board has decided that a mentor is required for a Chief Investigator, the designated mentor on the application form must also sign the report.



The Chief Investigator shall report to the Board on the progress of a project at the completion of each milestone or time period as set out in the Agreement.

### **The final research report**

The final report must be submitted to the Board within two months of completion of the project. It must be of a publishable standard and appropriate for presentation at an executive management level.

It will consist of:-

- a maximum of three (3) pages **executive summary**;
- one page detailing the **key implications** of the findings; and
- the overall report of the project in accordance with the Agreement, including a summary of the literature review, method, results and analysis / discussion.

The report is to be written in plain English, such that individuals who are not experts in research or the particular field of study (for example, clinicians, managers / decision makers, policy developers) can understand the report. In this context, the unnecessary use of jargon, technical terms or specialised terminology would be considered inappropriate and jeopardise the quality of the report.

Where the applicant is a team of researchers, all investigators so designated on the application form must sign the report.

If the Board has required a mentor for a research project, the report must be signed off by the nominated mentor.

### **Termination of agreement**

The Grant will be terminated and the Chief Investigator may be required to refund part or all of the funds granted by the Board if the Chief Investigator fails to perform, observe or fulfil any one or more of the covenants, obligations, requirements or provisions expressed or implied in the Agreement unless the non-performance or non-observance has been varied or excused by the Board in writing.

Physiotherapists Board  
of Queensland



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## **References**

*Physiotherapists Registration Act 2001*

*Freedom of Information Act 1992*

*Physiotherapists Board of Queensland Code of Conduct*

*Physiotherapists Board of Queensland Strategic Plan 2007-11*



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### Application Assessment Criteria

**Standard 1:** The research is relevant to the profession and the functions and published priority of the Board.

**Criteria:**

- a. The goal, potential significance and expected benefits to clinical education and practice are demonstrated.
- b. The relevance of the research to the profession is clearly identified.
- c. The relevance of the research to the Board' functions are clearly identified.

**Standard 2:** The research plan demonstrates and supports excellence in research.

**Criteria:**

a. Literature Review:

- i. analysis relevant to the literature
- ii. demonstrates (a) the need, (b) the relevance and (c) the significance of the research to the provision of competent physiotherapy.

b. Research problem/issue is:

- i. clearly and concisely described
- ii. consistent with the need identified from the literature review.

c. Aim(s) are:

- i. clearly identified

- ii. realistic and desirable.

d. Hypotheses/questions/expected outcomes are:

- i. consistent with the research problem/issue
- ii. clearly and concisely documented.

e. Research Design:

- i. clearly describes the research method
- ii. demonstrates sound research principles
- iii. addresses the hypotheses/questions/expected outcomes in the research method
- iv. describes a sampling method that has the potential to answer the hypotheses/questions/expected outcomes
- v. describes the data collection method and demonstrates its appropriateness to the research method
- vi. explains the data analysis method clearly and demonstrates the relationship to the hypotheses/questions/expected outcomes
- vii. demonstrates that the timeframe is appropriate and achievable.

f. Ethical implications are clearly identified and ethical clearance has been sought as appropriate.

g. Dissemination strategies are specified and their appropriateness to the research topic is demonstrated.

**Standard 3:** The investigator(s) (and if required by the Board, a mentor) have the demonstrated competence to successfully complete the proposed research.

**Criteria**

a. The applicant:

- i. presents evidence of successful completion of previous research including dissemination of results (conferences, seminars, reports, journal articles [refereed and non-refereed]) and
- ii. demonstrates knowledge, skills and ability in the research method.

The following information could be used to address this Standard:

- (a) a summary of the team addressing the criteria and
- (b) a resume covering the last 5 years for all investigators incorporating:
  - i. current employment and work history and
  - ii. qualifications and
  - iii. research currently and previously undertaken and
  - iv. papers presented and articles published.

**Standard 4:** The budget and its administration support the achievement of the proposed research.

**Criteria**

- a. Funds requested are clearly specified and are consistent with, and relevant to, the research design.
- b. The Chief Investigator demonstrates knowledge, skill and ability to effectively manage research budgets.
- c. The budget proposed is cost effective.