



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A GRANT APPLICATION

Applications for research grants must be submitted on the current Research Grants Applications Form which may be downloaded from the ADRF Website <http://www.ada.org.au/about/adrfgrants.aspx> **by 31 March each year**. Applications must contain all necessary information, as indicated in these guidelines, to allow them to be considered by the Research Advisory Committee and assessors without reference back to the applicant(s). They should be expressed in clear language and accurately typed. Applicants should pay careful attention to the preparation of their submissions and should check and proof-read them before forwarding them to the Foundation.

Research projects are assessed on the basis of scientific merit by the Research Advisory Committee (all members of which must be approved by the NHMRC). It is expected that projects will have direct or indirect bearing on the clinical practice of dentistry. The Committee's deliberations are assisted by at least two external referee reports on each application. Final marks awarded identify those projects that will be recommended for funding. As available funds may not be sufficient to accommodate all recommended applications, the rank order of the applications based on final marks will be used to allocate funds in whole or in part. Applicants must be aware that poorly prepared and incomplete grant applications will not receive high marks, and applicants are encouraged to ensure grants are accurately completed and proof read prior to submission.

The top-ranked project each year automatically gains access to the Australian Dental Industry Association Research Award. This Award offers an additional \$5,000 to the Principal Applicant for the grant, either for a new project or for an extension of the scope of the winning one.

Under the marking system adopted, additional weighting is given to the following categories:

Private Practitioner (General or Specialist)

- The Primary Applicant needs to be principally in private practice and not on a salary at a university or other institution.
- If any Associate Applicants are not, by the above definition, private practitioners then the Primary Applicant must be responsible for the greater share of the time devoted to the project.
- Private practitioner applicants are strongly advised to seek the advice of a recognised expert in the field of research to ensure the design of the project is sound.

- They are also encouraged, where appropriate, to work within university or institutional research units for access to infrastructure, equipment and consultation. This, however, does not preclude work being conducted independently.
- The final decision for inclusion in this category will be at the discretion of the Research Advisory Committee.

Junior Researcher

- This category is available to Primary Applicants who have obtained a PhD within the last three years.

Postgraduate Students (e.g. candidates for PhD, MPhil, MDS)

- If the Primary Applicant is a postgraduate student, the project mark will be weighted identically with Private Practitioners and Junior Researchers.
- If a postgraduate student is included as an Associate Applicant for a grant, and this person will have greatest time input to the project, then its mark will receive weighting, though less than the other three weighted categories.
- To encourage postgraduate and junior researchers it is recommended that these applicants, if doing the majority of the work, be listed as the primary applicant on multiple author grant applications. This will ensure the maximum weighting is given to the grant application.

Undergraduate Students

- If the Primary Applicant is an undergraduate student, the project mark will be weighted identically with Private Practitioners and Junior Researchers. Applications where the candidate is an undergraduate student undertaking the majority of the work must be accompanied by a letter from the supervisor indicating that the student will be able to commit the required time to the research without affecting their current academic studies.
- Undergraduate student researchers are advised to check to see if their application is better suited to submission as an Undergraduate Summer Vacation Research Scholarship

Applicants who are awarded research grants should be aware of their obligation to the Australian Dental Research Foundation Inc. to prepare a final report following the guidelines included in Clause 11 the Conditions Governing Research Grants for publication in the *Australian Dental Journal*. Where continued funding is sought by a grantee, a final report on the work completed must be received before further funding is provided.

The following guidelines should be noted in preparing each correspondingly numbered section of the "Application for Research Grant":

1. Project Title

- 1A The title should accurately reflect the proposed project.
- 1B The project must be identified either as new or a continuation of work that has been previously granted funds from the Foundation or other source.
- 1C Carefully choose key words that convey the essence of the project.

2. Applicants

The Primary Applicant should be the person directly involved and undertaking the research, and may not necessarily be the most senior researcher in a group. Applicants should indicate if they are applying for consideration as a Private Practitioner, Junior Researcher, Postgraduate Student or Undergraduate Student.

In cases where the Primary Applicant may not be the person administering the grant or receiving all correspondence, the associate applicant who will be responsible for administration of the grant must be nominated.

In situations where the Primary Applicant may cease involvement in the project for any reason, an awarded grant may only continue if the Primary Applicant notifies the Foundation in writing of their withdrawal and assigns the grant to one of the other applicants named on the original grant application.

3. Curriculum Vitae

Only a brief curriculum vitae is required. Please do not use additional pages.

4. Where is the work to be undertaken?

Adequate facilities to undertake the project must be available. Access to computing facilities and word processing is necessary. It is helpful to assessors if the details of access to such facilities are given in the application.

Attention is drawn to Clause 6 of the "Conditions Governing Research Grants" which refers to portability of grants.

The Directors are aware that career considerations will often make such transfers to another institution important to applicants. However, grantees should understand that, because assessment of a grant application requires assurances of adequate facilities and institutional support, a request to transfer to another institution means, in effect, a need for the Research Advisory Committee to conduct a new assessment of the project. It is entirely possible that such an assessment may be unfavourable, and no assumption of transferability of a project grant should therefore be made.

Important considerations in the re-assessment will be assurances from the head of the new institution that equivalent facilities and support will be available to the researcher. These assurances must be in writing. In many instances the simplest approach is to notify the Foundation's Directors of the change in institution, and to lodge a new application for the succeeding year's round of grants.

5. **Hours per Week**

This should be averaged over the year. This must be an accurate indication of the number of hours each applicant will commit to the research.

6. **Other Staff**

Give names and/or positions of persons not included as applicants who will assist with the project.

7. **Duration of Project**

Commencement date should be as soon as possible after 1 January in the year following the application.

Completion date should normally be during or at the end of the year following the application; however, it is recognised that some projects may extend into the subsequent year.

For projects designed to be managed in stages over more than one year, it is necessary to submit a new application each year.

Retrospective funding is not possible and funds will not be made available for research projects that have been completed.

8. **Research grants held in the past five years**

Whether related to the present application or not, all grants received during the course of the last five years are to be listed by project title, year(s), amount and source of funds.

If Australian Dental Research Foundation funds were granted, a final report must have been provided to the Foundation or be included with the present application.

9. **Research grants currently held**

List all grants currently held for all projects.

If Foundation funds were granted, annual progress reports must have been provided.

10. Current applications

Give details of all other grant applications which are currently under consideration.

11. Budget

In determining the scale of requested funds, applicants should bear in mind that Foundation grants in recent years have seldom exceeded \$10,000 and have averaged around \$5,000.

Since the back-up available in an established research institution may be able to compensate for a shortfall between funds granted and funds requested for a particular project, applicants are requested to identify (using the letter "A") costs that are absolutely essential if their project is to proceed.

Specify items under each heading.

Items costing in excess of \$5,000 will not be funded and written quotes must be provided for items of equipment over \$1,000.

The attention of applicants is drawn to section 4 of the "Conditions Governing Research Grants":

"Where the grant recipient(s) work(s) in an institution, a responsible officer of the institution shall submit a statement of the details of expenditure with each progress report (see Clause 10) and certify that the grant has been expended solely upon the work and for the purpose specified in the award of the grant and that all funds allocated in the grant not expended or carried forward have been returned to the Foundation.

Any applicant(s) not working in an institution will also be required to submit details of expenditure and to return to the Foundation all funds not expended."

Under normal circumstances the Foundation will not be able to support requests for salaries or high cost items of equipment.

Funding to cover institutional overheads should not be included.

12. Explanatory Notes on Budget

Show clearly under appropriate headings how the requested amounts were calculated. This must, for example, include an estimate of how many items of consumable supplies are needed and the cost per item. If necessary, use the letter "A" as in section 11.

13. Aims of the Project

State each aim clearly and concisely.

14. **Importance and Relevance of Aims**

In simple terms clearly identify the importance of the aims listed and how this research is relevant to oral health.

Briefly identify previous work in the area if any. Describe how the proposed research extends previous work.

If the project is a clinical one, consider whether the results would be of benefit to patient care.

Safety of human subjects must be a paramount consideration in any clinical research protocols. An estimate of benefit to risk should be made.

15. **Detailed description of the Project.**

Clearly and concisely define the matter to be investigated and describe the proposed methodology.

What hypotheses are to be tested?

Is the proposed project of such intrinsic value as to warrant the time commitment envisaged?

Is the time commitment which you have indicated consistent with the other details e.g the method?

Define the sample size required for statistically significant results at the chosen confidence level. **Consultation with a statistician is recommended during the experimental design phase.**

Provide an accurate description of the use of all materials and apparatus.

For materials research, full disclosure of all information relating to composition, properties, usage and manipulation should be available.

Consider the interaction of all possible variables and set up reliable controls.

Where indicated, use adequate randomisation of testing procedures and "blind" techniques to avoid possible operator bias. Standardisation of various experimenters may be required before the work can proceed to its definitive stage.

Applicants should if necessary seek advice on the design and management of the project by consulting with appropriate personnel, such as senior researchers or members of the Research Advisory Committee.

16. **Relevant references**

Include a short list of the key references relevant to the work.

17. Published Work

List only work published in the last five years. Mark with an asterisk before the first author work which is relevant to this project. Abstracts and conference proceedings or the like are not appropriate for listing.

18. Other Research

The applicant(s) should give a brief summary only of other current research activities either as principal researcher, associate or supervisor.

19. Ethical Clearance

Where animal or human experimentation is involved, ethical clearance is essential and for humans, 'informed consent' must always be obtained before any work is commenced. **Funds will not be allocated unless all relevant ethical clearance forms, signed by an appropriate authority, have been submitted with the application. Ethical clearance forms must be current and cover the period of the research.**

NHMRC ethical guidelines must be followed.¹

All necessary professional and legal requirements must also be observed.

20. Signature of Applicant(s)

Assent to the stated conditions under which grant applications will be considered must be indicated by means of personal signature(s). All the applicants of a group application must sign.

21. Certificate of Head of Department

The signed permission of the Head of a Department for the research project described in the application to be conducted in that Department is required for all projects except any carried out solely in a private practice setting. Such permission shall imply that the necessary facilities are available and that relevant ethical guidelines will be observed.

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¹ The publications "The Australian Code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes" and "NHMRC Statement on Human Experimentation and Supplementary Notes 1992" can be obtained from NHMRC and Commonwealth Government Bookshops.