

Health Professional Investigator (HPI) Operating Grant

Purpose

The Health Professional Investigator (HPI) Operating Grant provides project funding to principal investigators (PI) who are HHS-employed healthcare professionals. Inter-Professional teams, which include physicians, are encouraged, but physicians are not eligible to apply as lead PI for this grant. The HPI Operating Grant is for research initiatives directly relevant to the clinical mission and priorities/strategic plan of HHS. The grant objective is to provide support for pilot studies or research projects that have the potential to lead to larger projects and the possibility of external funding. The HPI Operating Grant offers an opportunity to foster and support a culture of inquiry for novice to mid-career investigators (within first ten years) under the mentorship of experienced researchers. Priority areas for funding include the following:

1. Consistent with, and likely to enhance, the main clinical programs at HHS.
2. Enhances research that aims to improve virtual clinical care pathways at HHS during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Multidisciplinary and collaborative (involving more than one clinical area or healthcare profession). Priority will be given to HPI proposals that engage team members and/or address healthcare disparities experienced by Indigenous and/or systematically underserved communities.
4. Advances and creates new knowledge that informs patient care that aligns with [HHS strategic plan and corporate goals: Patients, People, Sustainability, Innovation and Learning](#)
5. Conduct of pilot or feasibility studies which could facilitate obtaining additional funding through independent peer-review or other mechanisms.
6. Commitment to dissemination of research findings both internally and externally. Publication of findings is an expectation.

The intention of this grant program is consistent with the role of the Director, Clinical Health Professional Research:

1. To oversee the development of systems and processes to invest HHS resources in research projects or activities and to work with the Research Administration Office,
2. To act as a key mentor to develop researchers and research leaders at HHS, and to develop a mentorship system for encouraging new researchers at HHS,
3. To act as a scientific lead for new research initiatives in promising areas, in particular allied health.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Grants will be awarded based on excellence exhibited by a combination of the proposed research project and investigative team. Annually, three grants will be offered up to 15,000 each, for a one-year term. It is possible that grants may be renewed for a second year. Renewal will be contingent upon the following factors: a) evidence of progress in year one, b) justification for renewal, and c) availability of funds. Renewal requests will require submission of the request detailing items a-b and a budget expressing interest in a second year of funding. Prior to submitting a request for renewal, investigators must contact Daniela Bianco and/or Dr. Tara Packham. Renewal requests will be reviewed by a Scientific Review Panel.

2. Eligible principal investigator applicants are identified in the list of health professionals below. (Physicians are not eligible as PI for this grant program; however may be part of the research team):

<input type="checkbox"/> Associated Family Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Audiology <input type="checkbox"/> Chaplaincy <input type="checkbox"/> Child & Youth Services <input type="checkbox"/> Child Life <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnostic Imaging (Radiology, Nuclear, MRI Tech) <input type="checkbox"/> Dietetics <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise Science <input type="checkbox"/> Genetic Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Kinesiology <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Paramedics <input type="checkbox"/> Perfusion Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Prosthetics & Orthotics <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Social Work <input type="checkbox"/> Speech & Language Pathology <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic Recreation
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 3. Eligible principal investigators (as per above list) should have graduate research training at the Master's or PhD level. Individuals with clinical Master's degrees, plus evidence of research productivity will be considered. Individuals who do not have graduate research training may be considered if, 1) the investigator applies **with a co-principal investigator** (a clinical health professional) **with graduate research training**, and 2) the scientific mentor provides justification and strong support for the novice to mid-career investigator. An experienced scientific mentor, who is an active fulltime HHS staff member or McMaster faculty member who collaborates with Hamilton Health Sciences, must mentor applicants and agree to be a co-investigator on the proposed project. The senior staff mentorship role will include a commitment **to project oversight, guidance, and research career development**. It is preferred that the mentor also currently (or within the last 3 yrs.) hold an external peer-reviewed grant as the principal investigator.

 4. HPI Grants are limited to novice to mid-career investigators who:
 - Have never conducted independent research as a principal investigator, *or*
 - Have less than 10 years of experience as a principal investigator

 5. Grants are intended as seed money for 1 year. A minimum expectation will be publication of findings, acknowledging funding support received from Hamilton Health Sciences for HPI funded research. Ideally, opportunities for further research support should be sought and efforts to do so be facilitated and monitored by an experienced scientific mentor.

 6. HPI operating grants are not intended to support graduate study thesis work (MSc or PhD) nor can they be used to top up existing funding.

 7. Successful applicants are required to submit a 6-month, 1-year progress report, as well as a final completion report.

 8. Only one submission per principal applicant for each competition will be considered.

 9. A principal investigator may receive up to two separate HPI grants within ten years.

 10. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice on preparing their applications from Dr. Tara Packham, Interim Director–Clinical Health Professional Research (packhamt@HHSC.CA).
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E-Submission Requirements

Only complete applications will be accepted (refer to specifications listed under item #2 and #3 below). Incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Applications are to be submitted no later than midnight either on May 1st or October 31st of each year. Should either of these dates fall on a weekend day or statutory holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next regular business day at 0900am.

Applicants are responsible for:

1. Following up with authors who are providing letters of assessment and support letters to ensure they are received by the deadline date – no extensions will be granted.
2. Budget and Budget Justification – research **personnel costs MUST BE reviewed and approved by Research Administration at HHS** to validate role and appropriate salary scale. This process requires 3-4 weeks lead-time. Please contact Donna Catherwood at catherwood@hhsc.ca to facilitate this process. For McMaster University positions, evidence of costing through consultation with McMaster HR and/or Faculty Department Manager is required. Confirmation of their current position job classification, step level, and hourly rate from their respective manager and /or HR staff is needed for existing staff (email will suffice). *Hiring HHS staff, whenever possible, is highly encouraged and recommended through Research Administration. Please contact Sasha Eskandarian, Manager Research Compliance and Support Services at eskandars@hhsc.ca*
3. A complete application must include documents 1 through 8, as per below, formatted as ONE PDF file (requiring that all documents be individually converted to PDF and then merged into one PDF file) **AND** include original MS Excel format of the Budget Form. Both files (all inclusive PDF and MS Excel Budget) are to be sent as TWO attachments to HPI@hhsc.ca. Applicants are restricted to sending ONE email (with the two attachments) with the subject line marked "HPI - surname of applicant".
4. Checklist and order of documents for a complete PDF file e-submission is outlined below. All documents listed below **MUST BE** typed in Times New Roman, 11 font, with 1-inch margins; converted into PDF format and merged as ONE PDF file and submitted electronically via email to HPI@hhsc.ca.

Documents required for a complete E-Submission Application:

Applicants are RESPONSIBLE for sending the documents 1 through 9 (in the order specified below) as ONE PDF file PLUS original MS Excel Budget file. Documents 10 through 12 need to be submitted directly by the mentor and authors providing letters of assessment and support.

1	Completed and signed HPI Application Form.
2	Completed HPI Budget Form & Justification (2 pages) include original MS Excel file
3	Role Descriptions of Principal Investigator and/or Co-PI (if applicable) <u>and</u> Investigative Team (maximum 2 pages).
4	Role of Scientific Mentor (1/2 page) provide specifics (e.g., regular supervisory meetings, recruitment process, quality & safety issues, etc.).
5	Scientific Summary (1 page, the problem, rationale, importance).
6	Lay Summary (1/2 page, written at a grade 8 level).
7	Research Outline (6 pages) – excludes references/appendices/collaboration letters etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Proposal should include: 1) Purpose and Background; 2) Objectives; 3) Design and Methods; 4) Analysis Plan (including sex and gender-based analyses; and 5) Proposed Timeline• References – limited to 2 pages <i>Note: format for references has changed to the Vancouver style. To help you frame your references please see here.</i>• Appendices may include up to a maximum of 4 pages
8	Up-to-date full Canadian Common CV (CCV) of Principal Investigator (select CIHR draft form)
9	Up-to-date full Canadian Common CV (CCV) of Co-principal Investigator (if applicable)

Mentor and Support Letters MUST BE sent by each individual author (or support staff on their behalf), as a PDF file, via email to HPI@hhsc.ca with the subject line marked "HPI - surname of applicant",

addressed to the attention of: Dr. Tara Packham, Interim Chair - Scientific Review Board, Director – Clinical Health Professional Research, Hamilton Health Sciences.

10	Up-to-date BioSketch Canadian Common CV (CCV) of Scientific Mentor
11	Letter of Assessment from Scientific Mentor
12	Two letters of support: (one from the Clinical Manager or Director AND one from the Site-based Chief of Inter-Professional Practice).

Review Process

Scientific Peer-Review Committee

An internal scientific peer-review committee will review applications chaired by the Director, Clinical Health Professional Research at Hamilton Health Sciences. Membership of the review committee will include representation from at least 3 healthcare professions. The panel will be comprised of HHS staff members and McMaster University faculty members from relevant health professional groups who have research and peer-review experience. The membership of the review committee may be changed at the discretion of the Chair.

Review Criteria

The internal scientific peer-review committee assesses each application based on the criteria below. Applications are assigned a primary and secondary reviewer and grants are awarded based on the recommendation of each reviewer and the overall rating (score weighted out of 10). All projects must obtain Research Ethics Board approval prior to initiation. Funds are not released until the applicable Research Ethic Board final approval is granted.

a) Achievements and Activities of the applicant

- Publication and peer-reviewed presentation activity (in keeping with early researcher stage)
- Other research activity

b) Characteristics and Abilities of the applicant (mentor's assessments)

- Background preparation
- Motivation/initiative
- Skill and potential for research
- Intellectual ability
- Originality

c) Research Project

- Project that is feasible to complete with an HPI grant and timeline.
- Research contribution can be made in the absence of additional external funds.
- In line with research priorities of program/hospital.
- Scientific merit - quality and importance of the idea, feasibility of approach/methods.
- Potential impact of research on practice and health service delivery.

d) Achievements and Activities of the scientific mentor

- Demonstrated commitment to research
- Scientific Activity (publications & funding)
- Supervisory Record (trainees)

e) Research Training Environment of the scientific mentor

- Opportunities for learning for the applicant provided by the scientific mentor

- Scientific activity of the mentor, supervisory record.

f) Investigative Team

- Members are representative of a multidisciplinary approach (involving more than one clinical area or healthcare profession)
 - Research Team roles/expertise clearly described
 - Research experience of team members
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Deliverables

1. Applicants have 3 months from award letter date to claim funding awarded. Unclaimed funds will be returned to the granting source resulting in the applicant reapplying to the next competitive call for applications.
 2. All funds awarded will need to be spent, as per approved budget, within 18 months of receiving the grant.
 3. Applicants are restricted to holding HPI grant funds in a research account within Research Financial Services at Hamilton Health Sciences. Only expenses outlined in the approved budget will be processed.
 4. **A 6-month progress report** (after initiation of the research account) must be submitted to the Office of Research Administration to Dr. Tara Packham. Failure to submit this report will jeopardize continuation of the grant.
 5. **A one-year progress report** that describes research accomplishments and funding status must be submitted 1-year after initiation of the research account.
 6. **A final completion report**, which summarizes research findings and lists all publications and/or conference presentations resulting from the research, is required 6 months after the completion of the one-year project. **IMPORTANT NOTE: all approved study expenses need to be processed/paid prior to submission of the Final HPI Completion Report. Receipt of an HPI Final Completion Report will result in closing out the HPI study account with residual funding returned to the principal source account.**
 7. Applicant is responsible for the storage of research related documents and materials in accordance to the following SOP: [RCQA-SOP006 \(Investigator Study Files and Essential Documents\)](#), which include budgeting and paying for long-term storage upon study completion. Research Administration can facilitate storage by contacting Korinne Hamilton at researchstoragerequest@hhsc.ca to request assistance. HHS Guide on Document Storage/Archiving research study files can be found on the Research HUB and RA SharePoint Drive.
 8. The Hamilton Health Sciences must be acknowledged on all publications and presentations. (E.g., This research work was supported by Hamilton Health Sciences Health Professional Investigator Operation Grant).
 9. The Office of Research Administration must be notified of any revisions to the original approved HPI budget, changes to the study completion date or employment status of the principal investigator, Co-PI or mentor.
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Funding Source and Use

These awards are sponsored by Hamilton Health Sciences Research Administration Office through the mandate of the Director, Clinical Health Professional Research.

Revised: January 2022