

Gold Coast Health Collaborative Research Grant Scheme



Gold Coast Health

Major Research

Project

Grant

2025

Application Guideline

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2025 Collaborative Research Grant Scheme Application Guideline

Important Dates	
18 September 2025	Application - Opening Date
2 November 2025	Application - Closing Date
13 February 2026	Applicants notified of outcome
5 March 2026	Formal announcement of 2025 grant recipients at the Research, Innovation and Transformation Showcase.
Enquiries	Grants Administrator Research Office, Gold Coast Health Phone: 07 5687 0663 Email: grantsgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au

About the Collaborative Research Grant Scheme

The Collaborative Research Grant Scheme (RGS) is delivered by Gold Coast Health in collaboration with university partners, Griffith University, Southern Cross University and Bond University. The RGS is a competitive grant program which provides funding to support both established and early career researchers within the health service to collaborate with academic partners to undertake research that transforms health. The RGS is administered by the Gold Coast Health Research Office.

With the support and commitment of our partner institutions, the Gold Coast Health RGS offers a grants program for both established and early career researchers including a Major Research Project Grant along with a program of Capacity and Collaboration Building Grants.

In alignment with the vision and purpose of the Gold Coast Health [Research Roadmap 2025-2028](#), the RGS aims to advance and translate high-quality research to address our health priorities, leading to improved patient care.

The objectives of the RGS are to:

- Develop a pipeline of innovative research
- Support areas of existing strength towards national and international recognition
- Develop emergent research fields and support early career researchers
- Support meaningful collaborations between Gold Coast Health, our academic partners, external institutions, industry partners and community organisations;
- Conduct high-quality health research that leads to impact.

Funding Bodies

The Gold Coast Health RGS is supported by the following funding bodies:

- Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service
- Gold Coast Health Study, Education, and Research Trust Account (SERTA)
- Griffith University (Health Group)
- Southern Cross University (Faculty of Health)
- Bond University (Institute for Evidence-Based Healthcare and Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine)

Parameters

Grant Type	Value	Funding Period	Maximum Grants Offered
Major Research Project Grant	Up to \$150,000	Up to 2 Years	2

Overview and Eligibility

The Major Research Project Grant will provide up to \$150,000 to support research projects for a duration up to two (2) years. The grant is open to both **established researchers** and **early career researchers**

The grant provides two opportunities for Gold Coast Health researchers and clinicians (as the applicant) to work on a project with a co-lead Chief Investigator (co-lead CI) from a partner academic institution.

The research activity may be conducted across partner locations, but the application must clearly describe a genuine collaboration which strongly aligns to the [Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028 \(G28\)](#) and the [2025-2028 Research Roadmap](#) with the potential to translate into benefits for patients, the health service and wider community.

We are delighted to collaborate with the following universities, who will provide support to the Major Research Project Grants:

- Griffith University, Health Group (including the School of Medicine and Dentistry, the School of Allied Health Sciences, the PRECISE Centre)
- Bond University, Institute for Evidence-Based Healthcare and Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine
- Southern Cross University, Faculty of Health

The grant provides for the below collaboration opportunities for Gold Coast Health researchers and clinicians, as the applicant **co-lead** CI to work on a project with a **co-lead** CI from an academic partner institution.

For early career researchers applying for the Major Research Project Grant, an established or senior investigator should be included as a CI on the project.

1 x grant where the co-lead (CI) must be a Gold Coast Health employee with a minimum 0.4 FTE for the full duration of the project. And the project also includes a co-lead (CI) from Griffith University Health Group with a paid academic appointment of a minimum 0.4 FTE or a full-time HDR student within the Griffith University Health Group for the full duration of the project.

(Applications are invited from all disciplines across the Health group and from all disciplines at GCHHS)

1 x grant where the co-lead CI must be a Gold Coast Health employee with a minimum 0.4 FTE for the full duration of the project. The project must include a co-lead CI from at least one of the partner academic institutions with a paid academic appointment of a minimum 0.4 FTE or a full-time HDR student within the faculty for the full duration of the project.

Anticipated outcomes from this grant would include – but not be limited to – publication in a quartile one journal, development of an application for a nationally competitive grant, long-term collaboration with the partner university, translation to practice and/or other benefits to patients, the health service or wider community.

Eligibility

Please ensure the application meets the following eligibility criteria before submission.

Applicant Eligibility

- i. The applicant who signs off the application must be a Gold Coast Health employee at the time of applying, with a minimum 0.4 FTE at Gold Coast Health for the duration of the grant.
- ii. The co-lead CI's may only submit one application to the Major Research Grant 2025 round to a maximum of \$150,000.
- iii. The co-lead applicants can only **lead** one application each year in this category of grants. However, a co-lead applicant on one application may be named as a co-applicant on another grant BUT not as a lead CI.
- iv. The co-lead CIs on any successful grant attached to this round or previous RGS rounds will be ineligible to apply in subsequent years if they have outstanding annual reports or an overdue / incomplete final report.
- v. The project cannot previously have been funded by the RGS (2016-2023).
- vi. The project must involve patients, clients and/or consumers receiving care or have received care at Gold Coast Health and or related to health care service provision.
- vii. The Gold Coast Health applicant must secure approval from their line manager and lead in the area where the project activity will take place. The letter of support [template](#) should be used for this approval.

Research Team Eligibility

- i. The co-lead CI from the university partner must have a paid appointment, with a minimum 0.4 FTE or be a full-time RHD student for the full duration of the project.
- ii. The co-lead CI university partner must secure approval from their institution to co-lead the project for the full duration of the project. The academic partner letter of support [template](#) should be used for this approval.
- iii. Up to two additional CI's can be named in the application from either Gold Coast Health or partner institution. For this scheme, all CI's need to be employed by Gold Coast Health and or the relevant academic partner institution. The application can also name a maximum of six Associate Investigators (AI).

Resources

A number of webinars have been developed to assist applicants with their submission (e.g. budgets, consumers in research, research impact, and capability and capacity building). We would encourage all applicants to refer to these [resources](#) before commencing their application, and contact the Grants Administrator for any for specific advice.

Application process – SmartyGrants submission platform

Applications must be completed via the [SmartyGrants](#) online platform.

Once the application has commenced, ensure it is regularly **'saved'** to avoid losing any work due to timeouts. Save again after each session to ensure the application is updated. Applications can be saved at any point within the application form to return later. However, once **'submitted'**, applicants will be able to view the application but will be unable to make further edits.

Applicants have the ability to **share** and collaborate on draft applications with team members. This can be done through SmartyGrants' data repository platform [SmartyFile](#) using an existing SmartyGrants login. To 'share' an application, the lead applicant and nominated team members will first need to be added as users to the Gold Coast Health 'Organisation' within the 'SmartyFile' platform. Please contact the Grants Administrator to gain access and refer to the [information sheet](#) for instructions on using 'SmartyFile'

Key submission requirements

The following will need to be provided as part of the application.

Where noted, word limits will apply.

Application Section	Further information
BUDGET (200 words)	A budget template accompanied by a detailed justification for budget items (see further information on preparing your budget below). Please also refer to the budget guidelines and examples which will assist with budget preparation.
LAY SUMMARY (200 words)	A lay summary is to be provided within the application.
RELEVANCE TO THE RGS (200 words per dot point)	The following criteria are to be addressed in the application form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alignment with the purpose of the Collaborative Research Grant Scheme • addresses the significance and originality of the study • a well-developed description of team research capability and plans for research capacity building of Gold Coast Health staff, including but not limited to identified novice researchers • an outline of how it is planned to collaborate with consumers in the development and/or conduct of the study. • a description of the anticipated impact of this research.
PROTOCOL (3000 words)	Please use the protocol template provided. A completed protocol of no more than 3000 words (excluding reference lists) is to be submitted. Two tables of no more than 1 page each may be included. These tables are not included in the word limit. Study protocols that exceed these criteria will not be considered. A protocol template is available online.
CV FOR ALL TEAM MEMBERS	A CV (no more than 2 pages) is to be provided for each applicant. An optional CV template is available online.
LETTERS OF SUPPORT	Gold Coast Health Institutional Letter Support template is available online. The Academic Partner Letter of Support template is available online. Additional external partner letters of support will be required where use of their facilities and resources are necessary to complete the study.

Budget preparation

In preparing the budget, please include all costs required to undertake the study, including those costs which reflect in-kind and no cost items (please refer to the [budget guide](#)).

The following principles should be adhered to:

- All budget items must be clearly described and include a full justification.
- Applicants will provide actual rather than estimated or rounded up costs and, where possible, provide evidence of the cost at the time of budget development.
- Where costs are quoted in a foreign currency, a conversion to Australian dollars should be provided.
- Staffing costs should align with the tasks required for the study. For example, a medical officer hourly rate should not be used for activities which do not require this level of qualification, whether or not the team has identified a medical officer as being the individual who will undertake the work.
- It is strongly recommended that applicants seek formal labour costings from [Research Finance](#). All labour calculations must include on-costs (to cover superannuation, loadings and other allowances). If Research Finance has not provided a formal costing, 30% on-costs should be added to normal salary costs. For

studies spanning greater than 12 months, please adjust salary costs for each consecutive year to incorporate anticipated annual EBA/CPI increases of 4% (compounding).

- It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of Gold Coast Health procurement processes relevant to purchasing items within the budget. Refer to [Gold Coast Health procurement](#) information.
- Grant funds can only be used for discrete and specified costs as outlined in the budget.

Funding guidelines

The funding request cannot exceed \$150,000 for the Major Research Project grant. Applicants should be aware of the following funding conditions when preparing a budget, whereby funding may be used for:

- Costs incurred to conduct the activities of the project: This may include salaries to engage staff to undertake specific tasks that are not standard operational requirements. For example, research assistants can be engaged at a level commensurate with the work being undertaken.
- Consumables and equipment that are not usually part of standard practice or patient care.
- Fees associated with the use of facilities that are required for the project to be delivered,
- Fees associated with one open-access publication, up to \$5,000. Open access costs will not be supported where a member of the research team has access to publication support through an existing Council of Australian University Librarians Transformative Agreement.
- Costs associated with the production of a single poster or infographic, to a maximum value of \$200.

What cannot be funded

- Typically, operational salaries and costs, however some allowance may be made for staffing backfill requirements.
- Salary or costs for researchers to work or train outside Australia, nor will the grant support the work of an overseas researcher at an overseas institution.
- Employment of individuals whose rate of pay exceeds what would be reasonably required to undertake a specific task within the study.
- Consumables, equipment, and facilities that could be expected to be provided by the hospital or the associated university partner.
- Administrative costs (overheads), including university levies and indirect costs associated with administrative support.
- Conference travel or accommodation expenses (funding for these should be sought subsequent from other funding opportunities e.g. professional development leave/allowances and SERTA applications).
- Research costs covered by another funding source (applicants / recipients are required to notify the Research Office of any parallel funding applications that gain approval at any point throughout the application / project process as no discrete costs can be jointly funded).
- Costs associated with work that has already been completed.

Review and selection process

The Gold Coast Health Chair of Research will chair and convene the RGS Review Panel. The Panel will include representatives of the clinical researcher community at Gold Coast Health, academic partner organisations (where relevant to the specific scheme) and at least one Gold Coast Health consumer.

The Review Panel will assess all applications in each stream and determine those which are potentially fundable to be sent for peer review. Those receiving the lowest ranking (least competitive) will not be peer-reviewed and an early indication of an unsuccessful application will be provided to the GCHHS Lead-CI.

Each application will be reviewed and scored by a minimum of two expert reviewers (including one external reviewer). The full criteria and score weightings for the expert review are provided below in the application assessment criteria. Once all expert reviews have been received, the RGS Review Panel will convene to consider the scoring and comments of the expert review to determine its recommendations for funding.

The final decision of applications rests with the RGS Review Panel and is not subject to reconsideration or appeal.

Assessment criteria and weighting

Applications will be assessed by the Collaborative Research Grant Scheme reviewers using the following criteria: (A [rubric](#) is provided to assist applicants when addressing the assessment criteria)

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Significance	<p>Reviewers will consider if the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a justification for, and addresses the significance and originality of the study; addresses an important health issue relevant to the population serviced by Gold Coast Health (refer to the Gold Coast Health Strategic Plan 2024-2038 (G28)); has the potential to improve scientific knowledge, technical capability / capacity, or change practice and or likely to result in a successful future national funding application; and supports a highly desirable new or emerging collaboration which is not established. 	20
Scientific quality and feasibility	<p>Reviewers will consider if the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposes research questions or hypotheses supported by the literature; provides a description of the study methods which align with the study aim, which allow assessment of scientific quality and feasibility. 	30
Research capability and capacity building	<p>Reviewers will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the track record of investigators and relevance to the proposed study, including evidence of successful management and completion of research projects; the role of each investigator will enable them to undertake the proposed research; the career stages of the research team members and any relevant career disruptions; the research environment, including infrastructure and resources, in which the team will be undertaking the research; and the plan for research capacity building within the team and the roles of mentors. 	20
Collaboration and consumer engagement	<p>Reviewers will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the contributions of the collaborating organisation/s including in-kind support available; the roles of collaborating researchers, including the mutual benefits afforded by the collaboration; evidence of previous effective research collaboration or, a clear research collaboration plan for this study if this is the first time the researchers have collaborated; and how it is planned to engage consumers in the development and/or conduct of the study. 	15

Impact for Gold Coast Health and beyond	Reviewers will consider if the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligns with the vision for Gold Coast Health and purpose of this Grant Scheme; has a clear dissemination plan; and, could translate to a measurable impact. 	15
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Expert reviewers will be requested to score against each of the above criteria as follows:

Grade	Category	Description
7	Outstanding	Fully addresses all assessment criteria to an outstanding and exceptional by nationally competitive standard and presents an outstanding argument for selection.
6	Excellent	Addresses all outlined assessment criteria to an excellent standard and makes a compelling argument for selection.
5	Very good	Addresses most outlined assessment criteria to a very good (above average to high) standard and makes a strong case for consideration.
4	Good	Meets the outlined assessment criteria to an acceptable standard and presents a sound proposal for consideration.
3	Below average	Addresses only some of the outlined assessment criteria and the case for consideration is weak or poorly formulated.
2	Marginal	Does not sufficiently address the outlined assessment criteria and presents no case for consideration.
1	Unsatisfactory	Does not address any of the selection criteria and is not satisfactory for consideration.

The RGS Chair will report the outcomes of the review process and confirm the funding recommendations to the Gold Coast Health SERTA Committee.

Considerations will be based on:

- RGS Review Panel recommendation report;
- Gold Coast Health's strategic objectives and research strategy; and
- Available funding

The Gold Coast Health co-lead CI will be notified of the outcome of the application via email. Brief feedback will be provided for successful and unsuccessful applications.

Procedure for successful applicants

The procedure which follows the announcement of successful grant applicants is outlined below:

- Funding agreements will be prepared for execution by all parties to the agreement;
- Where defined, conditions for funding must be reconciled prior to execution of the funding agreement;
- Gold Coast Health co-lead CI submits a valid and complete application for HREC review;
- The Research Office will create an Internal Order Number (ION) for the Gold Coast Health co-lead CI; and
- Funds are made available according to the funding agreement schedule.

Funding Conditions

Grant recipients must adhere to the following conditions outlined in the Funding Agreement, including:

Research approvals

Projects must comply with the [National Statement for the Ethical Conduct of Human Research 2007 \(updated 2018\)](#) and the [Good Clinical Practice guidelines for Human Research Ethics in Australia](#). Grant recipients must gain approval from the Gold Coast Health HREC or another National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) certified HREC. Multicentre research projects must be reviewed by a certified HREC under the National Mutual Acceptance Scheme or another state-wide ethics review process.

An application for HREC review must be submitted within three months of the commencement date of the Funding Agreement unless otherwise negotiated and agreed. Gold Coast Health may withhold grant payments until HREC approval is granted.

All research conducted at a Gold Coast Health facility must obtain [Site Specific Authorisation \(SSA\)](#) from the Research Office.

It is a requirement that the co-lead CI's have completed Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training. Certificates of completion will be required prior to disbursement of funding.

Reporting

Grant recipients are required to submit annual timeline and milestone progress reports. These reports are to be submitted via SmartyGrants for review by the RGS Chair and Senior Director of Research.

Information requirements include:

- Summary of progress, outputs and any measures of impact;
- Challenges or obstacles in undertaking or completing the project, and;
- A financial statement for the reporting period, endorsed by the Senior Finance Analyst, Research.

Reports will be requested annually, calculated from the start date at the point of recipient announcement at the Research, Innovation and Transformation Showcase. Notification will be provided to recipients when the reporting template is available in the SmartyGrants system, more than one month prior to the due date for completion. Due dates are stipulated in the Funding Agreement. Funding will be released to recipients in annual instalments, which will be approved for release upon successful submission of annual progress reports and the achievement of project timelines. Delays in progress need to be detailed in the reports.

Variation requests

Variation requests are to be completed for consideration and approval by the Senior Director of Research. Types of variations include:

- change to team member(s)
- change in the budget or expenditure
- pause or delay in the project
- extension to the project timeline, or
- other major project change.

Variation forms for completion and submission will be made available in SmartyGrants. A form request should be directed to the Grants Administrator.

Appropriate recognition of the grant scheme

Recipients must acknowledge the RGS in reports, publications and presentations that draw upon work associated with the funded research. The standard acknowledgement to be used is as follows:

"This work was supported by the Gold Coast Health Collaborative Research Grant Scheme".

It is the responsibility of the Gold Coast Health co-lead CI to ensure that copies or links to all published articles, preprints and conference abstracts are provided to the Research Office via the Grants Administrator as soon as they become available.

Participation in promotion, monitoring, and evaluation of the grant scheme

Grant recipients may be contacted to provide information or attend an event to:

- present outcomes and updates of progress of the funded research at events, including research-related symposiums at Gold Coast Health or partner organisations, or
- raise the profile of the research work or RGS through internal or external media opportunities.

The Gold Coast Health co-lead CI is expected to proactively communicate and disseminate project outcomes, including working with the Research Office and Gold Coast Health, Strategic Communications.

Intellectual Property Rights

Recipients must adhere to the Gold Coast Health [Intellectual Property Policy \(Document ID POL1283\)](#) as amended from time-to-time, and to the clauses detailed in the Funding Agreement. Ownership and the associated rights of all Intellectual Property generated as a result of funded research will initially be vested in Gold Coast Health, unless otherwise agreed.

Where funded research involves a collaboration between Gold Coast Health and one or more university partners, conjoint employees or students, the Intellectual Property generated may be vested as agreed between the participating institutions. This will be negotiated through preparation of funding agreements.

Administration of funds

Grant funds will be administered through the Gold Coast Health Research Office. There are no administrative charges applicable to grant funds.

The Research Office executes financial delegation of research funds and oversees the financial management of grant funds, however, the Gold Coast Health co-lead CI is responsible for the project budget and day to day expenditure of funds. A grant recipient may only use funding provided under this scheme against the approved budget.

Grant recipients should liaise with the Research Office finance team for payment of invoices, staff costs, and other financial flows.

Any funding not expended within the agreed grant period will be retained by the RGS unless a variation request has been approved. All grants are awarded for a maximum of two years, with extensions only allowable via an approved variation request.

Funding instalments will only be released on submission and review of milestone reports.

As the grant recipient is not expected or required to supply any direct, routine, or regular goods or services in return for grant funding, no GST is payable on grant funding.

Glossary of Terms – Collaborative Research Grant Scheme

Career disruption	<p>A prolonged interruption to the ability to work due to pregnancy, illness/injury and/or carer responsibilities and or other factors. The period of career interruption may be used to determine eligibility as an early career researcher and allow inclusion of additional track record information for assessment. Refer to the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity Policy for further information.</p> <p>https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/nhmrc-relative-opportunity-policy</p>
Consumer	Consumer is a person who has used, or may potentially use health services, or is a carer for a patient using health services.
Co-Lead CI	A Gold Coast Health or university partner will take equivalent responsibility as Lead CI on the project.
Co-Lead CI - Gold Coast Health (lead of the application process and primary contact)	<p>The Gold Coast lead CI is expected to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the lead active researcher on the project; • the primary administrative contact for the grant application and project; • responsible for submission and confirmation of all required approvals and reporting requirements, including any Human Research Ethics Committee application and Site-Specific Authorisation, reporting of adverse events etc.; • employed in a role for which the scope of practice is directly relevant to the project requirements and responsibilities • responsible for compliance with codes of good practice in research, including the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research • responsible for the financial management of the project
Conflict of Interest	<p>A direct relationship (personal, reporting or supervisory) with any applicant, and or;</p> <p>A direct interest in the project, and or;</p> <p>Co-publications and or shared grant awards and or shared PHD student supervision within five years.</p>
Conjoint appointment holder	An individual with a conjoint appointment with Gold Coast Health and a university partner.

Discrete Costs / Phase	Means specific activities / phase of a project that are supported by funds provided under this grant only.
Early Career Researcher	An Early Career Researcher (ECR) is defined as a clinician who is within 10 years of either being awarded a Research Higher Degree, such as a MRes, PhD or MPhil, or their first peer-reviewed publication where they are a listed author (any order), whichever occurred first. Career disruptions will be considered where capacity to work has been impacted.
Established Researcher	More than 10 years of research activity.
In-Kind Cost	In-kind contributions are an indirect cost to Gold Coast Health. In-kind is where no actual funds are available to cover the cost, but the Department has confirmed support through providing staff hours or supplies, for example printing or stationery.
Intellectual Property	All copyright and neighbouring rights, all rights in relation to inventions (including patent rights), plant varieties, registered and unregistered trademarks (including service marks), registered designs, confidential information (including trade secrets and knowhow and circuit layouts), and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields.
No Cost	Personnel is considered to have no cost when the research activity is a normal requirement of the staff member's position, generally this is listed in the person's role description or employment contract.
Partner Institutions	Griffith University, Southern Cross University, Bond University
RGS Review Panel	The RGS Review Panel is made up of representatives of the clinical researcher community at Gold Coast Health, academic partner organisations (where relevant to the specific scheme) and at least one Gold Coast Health consumer. The RGS Review Panel is Chaired by the Chair of Research, Gold Coast Health. Responsibilities are outlined in the Gold Coast Health Collaborative Research Grant Scheme Review Panel Terms of Reference.
RGS Expert Reviewer	A reviewer with a high level of expertise and research experience in line with the research project topic. Expert Reviewers are sourced externally to undertake review of applications.
SmartyFile	SmartyFile is an online portal which allows applicants (Lead / Co-Lead CIs) to manage, share and collaborate on submissions with team members.
SmartyGrants	SmartyGrants is an online grant application and management platform.

