



# SERTA funding support for journal publication fees

Guidelines for applicants

Version 6.1 October 2024

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Overview of SERTA funding initiatives at Gold Coast Health

The Gold Coast Health (GCH) Study, Education and Research Trust Account (SERTA) provides funding for research, education and professional development activities and is available to all GCH employees where the activity is applicable to the applicant's work and is consistent with GCH strategic goals.

The SERTA Committee is administered as per the Health Service Directive: *Private Practice in the Queensland Public Sector* and reports to the GCH Executive Research Committee and *GCH Private Practice Governance Committee*.

This guideline outlines the application process for employees seeking financial support for **open access journal publications**.

Information about other categories that SERTA supports (e.g., professional development, research grants) can be [found here](#).

## 1.2. Overview of SERTA support for journal publications

SERTA provides funding support for peer-reviewed journal publications as a key initiative that aligns with Gold Coast Health's strategic goal to meet evolving patient need through clinical research, innovation and transformation.

Eligible GCH staff as first or last (senior) author qualify for **one 'approved' application per year** (based on a 12-month period from date of last approval) to support journal publication fees to a **maximum of AUD 5,000**. Where overseas conversion costs exceed the capped amount of AUD 5,000, the author or the operational area will be responsible for additional costs.

The annual SERTA budget to support journal publications is capped and together with the ever-increasing cost of open-access publication fees, means that the committee will not be able to fund all applications.

Authors should note, that where there is an academic title, conjoint appointment or a university collaboration, consideration should be given as to eligibility to publish open access under the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Transformative Agreement prior to making an application to SERTA.

Where applicable, authors should contact their institution's library staff for further information on publishing under the CAUL-negotiated agreements and to confirm the proposed journal's participation in the arrangement.

---

### 1.3. Preliminary requirements

Before progressing an application, the following checks are to be completed to ensure that your journal choice meets the criteria for funding. The Library will assist with this process which is outlined below. If your nominated publication meets the criteria, we ask that you commence your application once you have received the first reviewers' response following submission to the publisher.

i) **Predatory Publishing**

Use the [Think, Check, Submit](#) tool to ensure your journal of choice is not a predatory journal

**Table 1: Predatory publishing**

Predatory publishers and journals are flourishing. The latest estimates are that there are tens of thousands of predatory journals masquerading as genuine scholarly publications. Such journals claim false indexing, bogus metrics, and promise quick and easy publication. One of the strategies that they use is to send unsolicited email invitations to researchers to entice them to publish in their journals. In reality, these journals publish anything for fees without the benefit of peer review or the usual oversight of legitimate journals.

Publishing low-quality papers in predatory journals undermines your credibility and reputation and reduces the visibility and citations of the research. It is in everyone's interest to make sure that the journal's authenticity has been verified before a manuscript is submitted. If you are in any doubt about the legitimacy of the journal, please consult a librarian *before* proceeding with this application.

(ii) **Initial Library Check**

Please complete the [Library Check](#) template and email it to the Library Manager for review of your journal choice for this application. Library may then contact you to discuss the journal's ranking, quality, and suitability. Alternatively, please contact the Library Manager Ph: 5687 1585 for questions and to discuss your journal choice.

Further information on publishing your article can be found on the Gold Coast Health [Library Website](#).

(iii) Confirm the indexing status of your journal of choice with Library, and that it is highly ranked, your paper matches the scope of the journal and it will meet the criteria for submission to SERTA.

**Table 1: Journal indexing**

Journal indexes (also called bibliographic indexes or bibliographic databases) are lists of journals, organized by discipline, subject, or type of publication. Journals included in an index are required to undergo a rigorous vetting process and are considered of higher quality than journals that are not.

---

## 2. Eligibility criteria

### 2.1. Eligibility criteria checklist

- I have assessed the journal against Think, Check, Submit (<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>) and I am confident that my journal of choice is not a predatory journal.
- I have confirmed the ranking and suitability of the journal of choice with library.
- I am currently employed at Gold Coast Health (permanent or temporary appointment for more than 12 months) at a minimum of 0.2 FTE. Applicants who hold conjoint appointments are eligible to apply.

Former employees of GCH who have transferred to another Hospital and Health Service within the previous 12 months may be eligible to apply.

In these cases, the application *must* relate to a research project that commenced and was completed during the applicant's period of employment with Gold Coast Health. The applicant's former Gold Coast Health line manager must attest to this in the authorisation form (see section 2.2. below).

- I have not received funding for a journal publication under the SERTA Open Access Journal category in the last 12-month period either as a first author, joint first author, or last (senior) author.
- SERTA funding for a journal publication ***related to this study*** under the SERTA Open Access Journal category has not been approved in the last 12-month period.
- This application is not eligible under the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Transformative Agreement, or the proposed journal does not fall under the arrangement.
- No other grant funding or operational resources are available to support article fees for open access publication.
- I have no outstanding reports / requirements for research grants, or any other categories previously funded by SERTA.
- I am an experienced researcher or as a novice researcher/author, I have, in addition to library, discussed the choice of journal(s) in which I wish to publish with at least one person who is an experienced researcher.  
If you do not know any experienced researchers, or if you would like a second opinion, please contact the research office [researchgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:researchgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au) to be connected with one of the conjoint researchers at GCH for advice.
- There are alternative journals for submission of my manuscript in the event that:
  - (i) my current SERTA application is not approved, or
  - (ii) my manuscript is not accepted in this journal.
- I have acknowledged GCH as an affiliation for this work.

- 
- I have adhered to appropriate Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research (EQUATOR) [reporting guidelines](#), where applicable.
  - This application is not retrospective (i.e., I am not applying to have publication fees reimbursed where fees have been paid and/or the manuscript has been published).

## 3. How to apply

Once you have completed the preliminary requirements and you are confident that your journal of choice meets the criteria, you can access the application form in **SmartyGrants** via [this link](#).

- (i) Confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria outlined above.
- (ii) Ensure you have the documents requested below ready for upload.
- (iii) Follow the link to the SmartyGrants application form.
- (iv) Download or preview the form before you commence your submission.
- (v) Complete the application, upload supporting documents and then submit. Once you submit your application, you will be able to view it but you will be unable to make further edits.  
(A link to the SmartyGrants help guide is provided below)

### 3.1. Supporting documents checklist

Please ensure all documents are converted to PDF prior to uploading into your application.

- Letter of Support** (the template is [available here](#)) to be signed by your line manager.
- Copy of your **manuscript**  
*Please note: when uploading your manuscript, this should be the version received back from the publisher following the first reviewer response.*
- Provide evidence attesting to the journal's publication fees (e.g., a screen shot of the journal's webpage that states the publication fees or a copy of an email that lists these fees).

## 4. Application review process

### 4.1. SERTA Committee review dates

The SERTA Committee meets on the **third Wednesday of each month**. Applications must be received **two weeks prior** to the scheduled meeting to allow for application reviews to take place.

**Please submit your application before the deadline to ensure consideration at the meeting.**

---

Applications will be subject to an eligibility check and must include all required information and attachments prior to being forwarded for review and consideration by the Committee. Any late or incomplete applications will be deferred until a subsequent meeting.

Retrospective applications will not be considered.

## 4.2. Selection process

The following criteria will be a consideration as part of the SERTA Committee's decision.

- Whether the research study was conducted primarily at GCH
- Any SERTA funding received by the TEAM in the previous 12-month period.
- The journal ranking i.e., ranked Q1 in its specific field, or Q2 where there are no other relevant Q1 ranked journals with an aim/scope that aligns with the topic of the publication. Information on individual journal quartile can be searched [here](#).
- Indexing status of the journal.
- Adherence to reporting guidelines, where applicable. These can be found [here](#) on the Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research (EQUATOR) website.
- The quality of the research and the impact that the study findings are likely to have (e.g., advancing scientific knowledge, changing clinical practice at GCH or at a state/national/international level, informing local/national policies, improving health outcomes for patients etc.)
- An equitable balance of SERTA publication funding support across different GCH divisions/professional disciplines.

## 4.3. Announcement of funding decisions

The Committee's decision will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the committee convening.

If your application is successful, you will be provided with further details on how to claim the funds and how to acknowledge SERTA funding in your publication.

If your application is unsuccessful, you may be eligible to submit a subsequent application. Please contact the Research Office to discuss further.

---

## 5. Contact information

### 5.1. Questions about the application process

Please contact:

Jan Wayland  
Senior Research Support Officer  
Research Office  
Gold Coast University Hospital  
PED Building, Level 2, 1 Hospital Boulevard, Southport

**Email:** [GCSERTA@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:GCSERTA@health.qld.gov.au)

**Phone:** 07 5687 0663

### 5.2. Questions about your choice of journal

Please contact:

GCH Library staff  
**Email:** [GCHLibrary@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:GCHLibrary@health.qld.gov.au)  
**Phone:** 07 5687 1585

### 5.3. Questions about SmartyGrants

Please refer to the [SmartyGrants Help Guide](#) for help with using the online system.