

GUIDELINES  
FOR  
APERF  
RESEARCH  
GRANT  
APPLICANTS

## 1. Background

### 1.1. The Australian Podiatry Education Research Foundation

The Australian Podiatry Education and Research Foundation (APERF) was established by the Australasian Podiatry Council (A Pod C), now known as the Australian Podiatry Association Limited (A Pod A), to promote foot health and to fund research into the causes and treatment of foot problems. The role of APERF is to:

- Raise funds on a national basis to support podiatric research in Australia
- Award grants that facilitate research investigating the causes, prevention, and treatment of foot problems (this includes educational research)
- Provide, upon request, information on foot health to the public and/or other interested parties.

### 1.2. Aims of APERF grants

The foundation offers financial support for projects that are focused on the causes, management and treatment of foot and related problems, professional issues such as the development of aspects of podiatric care, and as of 2022, for projects that will promote excellence in podiatry education.

It should be noted that *funds can only be allocated to an approved Australian research institution or an Australian public institution as referred to in Section 73A of the Income Assessment Act.*

### 1.3. Structure of APERF

The APERF grant scheme is administered by the A Pod A. The Trustees determine and set guidelines for the fund's administration and review and determine the outcome of each grant application.

#### ***Current Trustees:***

Dr John Arnold

Prof Hylton Menz

Dr Paul Bennett

Dr Dean Samaras

Dr Shan Bergin (Chair)

Dr Peta Tehan

Dr Sheree Hurn

## 2. General information

### 2.1. Eligibility for application

The APERF grant scheme is open to everyone involved in foot and foot-related research (including clinical research) and/or podiatry education. However, the primary or chief investigator must be:

- (i) a registered podiatrist in Australia
- (ii) a member of the A Pod A.

Applications that have additional members of the research team that are registered podiatrists and members of the A Pod A will be viewed favourably. Special weight will also be given to applications in which experienced podiatrists mentor more junior podiatrists as investigators.

Grants are available to both experienced and inexperienced researchers, however emphasis will be placed on the quality of the application. Grants will only be provided to research projects that have merit; that is, they investigate a significant problem or major issue in the theory or practice of podiatry, they develop new knowledge in either fundamental or applied areas, they contribute to the promotion of excellence in podiatry education. Ethical, methodological, feasibility and practical issues are considered in the review of applications.

Please note that applications must be formatted exactly according to this *Guidelines for APERF Research Grant Applicants* document and the *APERF Research Grant Application* form (i.e., the template), otherwise they will not be considered (the Trustees will strictly adhere to this requirement).

## 2.2. Terms of the grant

APERF makes available a limited number of grants annually. The grant amounts available each year vary, and this is dependent upon APERF's financial position at the time of each grant round.

Funding amounts available in 2023 are as follows:

Category A: grant amount up to \$30,000 (study duration up to 2 years)

Category B: grant amount up to \$15,000 (study duration up to 1 year)

Category C: grant amount up to \$10,000 (study duration up to 1 year). Please read section 2.3 of this document and ensure your study meets the relevant criteria before applying for Category C grants.

Because funding is limited, funds will be restricted as follows:

- Investigators may not use grant funding as salary, or in lieu of salary
- Funds may be made available for research assistants and technicians, where appropriate, however as funding is limited, it does not normally extend to payment of a project officer to run the program of study
- APERF will consider applications for supplementary funding for projects previously funded from other sources, however applicants must demonstrate that a funding top-up is merited, based on substantiated progress made before the date of application to APERF for supplementary funds
- Projects that require more substantial funding are encouraged to seek it from other sources
- Funds may be granted for feasibility studies to investigate the potential of a project, particularly when seed funding may help the investigators obtain further and more substantial funds from another source
- Researchers may apply for funds to support development of Systematic Reviews, however the funding amount will be capped at \$1,500
- Any capital equipment purchased with funding through this foundation will remain the property of the institution receiving the funding, however funding will not be provided for capital equipment that might reasonably be expected to be provided by the institution (e.g. standard computer equipment and software)

- All budget items must be inclusive of costs associated with the Goods & Services Tax
- APERF will not consider applications from investigators yet to deliver a final report on a previous APERF grant
- APERF will not consider applications from investigators who have been awarded a previous grant but have failed to acknowledge this support in subsequent publications and/or presentations
- Researchers may apply for an extension to their study completion date if issues outside of the researchers control delay study progress

### 2.3. Category C grants

In 2022, APERF signed an MOU with the Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans (ACPD), whereby the ACPD will provide up to \$10,000 per annum to support projects that seek to promote excellence in podiatry education. Any clinician/researcher/educator interested in applying for a Category C grant must ensure their project meets the following criteria:

**2.3.1** Applications for Category C funding **MUST** address one or more of the following priority areas:

- a) Podiatry workforce and sustainability
- b) Quality assurance of workplace learning
- c) Innovation in learning and teaching to enhance student engagement
- d) Indigenous curriculum and culturally responsive practice

**2.3.2** Applications for Category C funding **MUST** demonstrate alignment to the following criteria:

- a) Impact and applicability to the education of podiatry students (undergraduate and/or postgraduate)
- b) Outcomes that inform excellence in podiatry education and enhance the reputation of podiatry to meet the needs of students, consumers, and other stakeholders
- c) Achievable translation of research outcomes to podiatry practice

- d) Collaboration between podiatry educators and a range of stakeholders including students, community representatives, industry partners, researchers, and clinicians

**2.3.3** Unlike Category A and Category B APERF grants, the **Category C grants are open to persons located in both Australia and New Zealand**

**2.3.4** Category C grant applications **MUST** be made using the APERF Research Grant Application form and must otherwise adhere to all other guidelines stipulated

## **2.4. Communication of results**

Successful applicants will be required to communicate the final outcomes of their research in one (or more) of the following ways:

- Presentation at a national conference of the A Pod A
- Presentation at a national conference appropriate to the research topic
- Publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

APERF's support should be formally acknowledged in any form of publication of the research.

Additionally, APERF requests that grant recipients inform the APERF Secretariat of any publications (please provide a PDF copy), conference presentations and reports resulting from their funding.

Please also read Section 4 'Responsibility and Accountability of Grant Recipients' in this document, regarding the requirements of ongoing reporting to Trustees.

## **2.5. Institutional support**

As all research is to be conducted through an approved institution, APERF requires that details and evidence of the support be provided by the institution. In accepting a grant, the institution is required to:

- Provide the facilities and services necessary for the efficient conduct of the research
- Meet the normal overhead expenses including maintenance costs on equipment purchased with APERF research funds.

## **2.6. General administration**

### ***2.6.1. Research officer***

All applicants must nominate a Research Officer for the grant. This will be considered to be the primary investigator, unless otherwise indicated. The Research Officer will be the contact person for all correspondence from APERF, including the certification of expenditure and progress reports. The Research Officer is responsible for the prompt forwarding of progress reports to the A Pod A office.

### ***2.6.2. Payment of funding***

Payments of grant funds will be made upon the terms and conditions as specified by APERF. Unless otherwise specified, payments will be six monthly, in advance of all nominated expenses other than equipment, for which full payment can be made in the first payment. Payment can only be accessed by means of an invoice from the successful institution(s) to the A Pod A Finance Officer. The invoice must contain bank details to enable a direct transfer of funds. A separate invoice is required for each grant.

### ***2.6.3. Unused funds***

Any grant funds paid for a project that are unspent or uncommitted at the end of the specified time must be refunded to APERF. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of APERF may approve that the funds be carried forward. When this occurs, the Research Officer must make a written application to the chair at the end of the nominated time period.

### ***2.6.4. Certification of expenditure***

The Research Officer must, by no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> of March each year, produce a certificate of expenditure for each item of expenditure for the previous 12 month period. If not provided, funding may be withheld. This certificate must indicate:

- The use of funds received and their expenditure or commitment
- All funds that have not been expended or committed

Applicants are reminded that University Administration may charge research grant recipients a fee (i.e. on-costs). Please ascertain whether that is the case; if so, report it in the budget section of your

application, as further funds cannot be allocated to cover these costs if not included in the original application.

#### ***2.6.5. Termination of grant***

Notwithstanding any other condition, APERF may, at any time, terminate a grant if it believes:

- The research for which the grant is approved, is not being carried out with competence, diligence and scientific honesty
- A primary investigator or graduate research student, whose participation is essential to the conduct of the project, leaves the institution or ceases to be involved in the project.

The A Pod A office must be notified promptly if there is a change in research personnel.

#### ***2.6.6. Intellectual property***

Intellectual property resulting from funded research normally belongs to the administering or host institution. However, APERF reserves the right to refer to funded research for promotional purposes.

#### ***2.6.7. Institutional ethics and research office approval***

Applicants are reminded that institutional ethics approval is essential; projects will not be financed unless evidence of approval is provided. An institutional ethics committee may require submission of the ethics proposal at least one ethics committee meeting before the commencement of grant funding. Even earlier is advisable in case reworking or resubmission of the ethics application is required. Similarly, the institutional research office may also require a copy of the research grant application in advance of the submission deadline.

#### ***2.6.8. Timeframe for grants***

A grant shall be made for a period as agreed to by the applicants and the foundation up to a maximum period of 2 years. The normal commencement dates for grants is the 1<sup>st</sup> of March in the year following awarding of the grant by the APERF Trustees. This date coincides approximately with the commencement of the tertiary academic year. However, it may be extended with the agreement of the APERF Trustees. Under these circumstances, permission to carry the grant forward 12 months



past this date must be agreed to in writing by the Chair of APERF. Payments will not commence until all institutional approval, including ethics approval, has been finalised.

### 3. Application process

One electronic copy of the completed application form must be provided to the foundation no later than the extended deadline of midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, each year. The applicant must complete all sections of the form strictly adhering to the guidelines and provide evidence of support where required. Institutional ethics approval from the nominated institution must be provided before funding can commence.

### 4. Responsibility and accountability of grant recipients

The grant extends for a period of up to two (2) years. Investigators must provide written reports on the progress of the project and certification of expenditure as indicated in Section 2.5. Successful recipients of grants awarded to address the promotion of excellence in podiatry education should be aware that progress and final reports will be forwarded to the Australian Council of Podiatry Deans, who provide the funds awarded in this category.

### 5. Timeline for grant applications

There will be one call for applications for APERF grants each year. A second round may be advertised subject to availability of funds.

- **Call for applications:** September 1st via the APERF website, A Pod A member correspondence, social media (e.g. Facebook), and professional development updates
- **Closing date for submissions:** 31<sup>st</sup> October
- **Date for review of applications (Trustee meeting):** mid-December
- **Applicants notified by:** 31<sup>st</sup> January
- **Payment of first instalment:** 28<sup>th</sup> of February
- **Assumed starting date for project:** 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Any clarification of issues noted in the original application (i.e. resubmissions) required by the Trustees will be considered each March.

## 6. Communication

For further information relating to the grant application process please email:

[aperf@podiatry.org.au](mailto:aperf@podiatry.org.au)