ASUM

Standards of Practice

Promoting ultrasound excellence



Guidelines, Policies and Statements

ASUM Research Grants Policy

Approved Feb 2022

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Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine Research Grants Scheme (ASUM RGS) aims to provide early and mid-career researchers funding for high quality projects with the potential to discover new ideas and advance knowledge in all medical ultrasound disciplines.

1.2 Scope

This guideline details information on the ASUM RGS, including eligibility criteria, general conditions, application process, and other relevant information.

2. Eligibility Criteria

2.1 General Criteria

The ASUM RGS is available to both teams and individual researchers.

Only one application may be submitted for the same project in any grant opportunity.

A researcher may only be named on one application within any grant opportunity. Applicants who submit or are named on multiple applications will be requested to withdraw all but one application involving that named researcher.

Applicants are advised to carefully read all details and requirements before submitting an Expression of Interest to the ASUM Research & Grants Board.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria of Chief Investigators

To be eligible for an ASUM RGS, Chief Investigators must:

- be a Professional member of ASUM for at least 2 consecutive years and maintain membership for the duration of the funded period;
- have appropriate qualifications relevant to the performance of medical ultrasound in a clinical environment;
- be employed for at least 20 percent of full time equivalent (0.2 FTE) in the medical application of ultrasound;
- predominantly reside in Australia or New Zealand with full working rights in that country for the project activity period;
- have the support of their clinical facility for the conduct of the research project;
- have obtained ethics approval for the conduct of the proposed project from their affiliated institution;
- adhere to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research;
- have the time and capacity to make a serious commitment to the project;
- be actively involved in the project and not assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be done by others;

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- take intellectual responsibility for the project, from conception, including any strategic directions and communication of results;
- not be a current member of the ASUM Board of Directors.

Note: In addition to the Chief Investigator, any researchers named on the Research Grant application must not be current members of the ASUM Board of Directors.

3. General Conditions

3.1 Period of the Grant

Each grant opportunity is open for applications once a year, or as determined by the ASUM Board of Directors. Applications undergo a competitive review process and grants are awarded based on excellence, by the ASUM Research & Grants Board.

Grants will be awarded for a one-year period only, with an automatic carry forward provision for the subsequent year. Applicants who have been funded previously from an ASUM RGS grant and wish to continue the same project in following years must submit a new application specifying that further funding is sought.

3.2 Maximum Number of Awards

Projects that have already received ASUM RGS funding by two separate grants are not eligible for further funding, researchers in this scenario would be encouraged to seek funding from competitive national funding bodies relevant to their discipline area.

Externally funded research grantees are eligible to apply for ASUM RGS funding for a new project that is unrelated to the project already in receipt of funding. The applicant must justify how the proposed project differs from all “current” financially supported research and disclose all externally awarded grants.

3.3 Endorsement

Applications for funding must include written and signed approval from the Head of the chief investigator’s administrative unit for conduct of the proposed research by the investigator within their facility. The signed endorsement must state that the administrative unit(s) supports the investigator’s salary and provides the space for the proposed research project and approves of the project to be conducted within their facility.

3.4 Funding

Funding to support the ASUM RGS is sourced from the ASUM budget and determined by the ASUM Board of Directors.

The RGS will award 2 projects, each at a maximum grant value of AUD $20,000. Applicants may apply for funding between $5,000.00 and $20,000.00, depending on the needs and merit of the research project.

The grant will be awarded in three instalments. The first instalment is paid in February/March (40% of award). The second instalment will be made available upon receipt of a mid-year progress report (30% of award). The final instalment will be paid after presentation of the research report at the ASUM Conference (remaining 30% of award).

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ASUM's preferred funding method is by reimbursement of expenditure on submission of tax invoices. Alternatively, up to 40% of the amount may be transferred to a controlled cost centre of the university or public hospital at the start of the year, with the balance transferred at the end of the project on submission of a fully itemised account of expenditure against the initial grant sum.

In general, no more than 70% of funding will be paid before the final report (comprising the data analysis and initial write-up) is presented to, and accepted by, ASUM.

Funding is conditional upon the chief investigator remaining a member of ASUM. If the chief investigator leaves the research team, the new chief investigator may request continuation of funding and this may be granted, at the discretion of the ASUM Board, only if the new chief investigator meets the eligibility criteria specified in ASUM's Research Grants Policy.

Where reasonable delays occur, grants may be carried forward to the next year, on application and at the discretion of the ASUM Board of Directors.

3.5 Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply for acceptance of an ASUM RGS award:

3.5.1 Mid-year progress report

The mid-year progress report should reference the research grant ID and comprise of a one-page summary outlining the results to date, projected outcomes and timeframe for completion of the project. This progress report is required from all grant recipients for the second instalment to be paid. The progress report is due in June and should be emailed as a PDF attachment to asum@asum.com.au.

3.5.2 ASUM Conference

All grant recipients are required to present their research outcomes at the ASUM Conference. It is the grant recipients' responsibility to ensure that the registration process for this is correctly followed. Costs related to the conference, such as registration fees, travel and accommodation are not included in the grant.

3.5.3 AJUM Manuscript submission

At the conclusion of the project, all grant recipients are required to submit a manuscript for publication in the Australasian Journal of Ultrasound in Medicine (AJUM). The Journal publishes original research studies, review articles, case studies and commentary on current issues in medical ultrasound. AJUM is a peer reviewed journal and articles submitted are assessed by reviewers who are members of a panel of acknowledged experts in medical ultrasound, therefore, publication is not guaranteed.

3.6 Eligible Grant Activities

The ASUM RGS may only be spent on eligible expenditure items that directly support the project and in accordance with any special conditions in the grant agreement.

The budget justification should be used to sufficiently detail item costs and provide an indication of how the item costs relate to the research plan.

All items within the application are to be classified under the following categories:

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3.6.1 Equipment

Researchers should use existing equipment wherever possible. The cost of leasing or sharing such equipment, as well as cost of maintenance should be included. Items of equipment costing more than $2,000 should be listed separately. Costs should be based on the latest prices that can be obtained by the supplier. A recent quotation exclusive of GST must be attached to the application. Only items of equipment considered essential for the project will be considered.

3.6.2 Maintenance

Maintenance may include, but is not limited to:

- Consumables
- Sets of printed material, microfilm, postage
- Access to publications, collections, and databases

3.6.3 Travel

Expenditure on travel essential to the project should be specified and justified in the application, including technical and logistical costs and travel expenses (accommodation, meals, incidental costs).

3.6.4 Other / Personnel

Salary support must be justified with reference to pay scale, and appropriate to qualifications and experience.

Any other items included in the budget should be described appropriately.

3.7 Prohibited Grant Activities

The following expenditure items will not be supported by the ASUM RGS:

- Building, renovation and infrastructure costs
- Salary for researchers to fund work outside Australia/New Zealand
- Facilities and equipment that is reasonably expected to be provided by the School, Centre or Department where the researcher is employed
- Commercialisation of intellectual property

3.8 Privacy Policy

All personal information will be treated in compliance with ASUM's Privacy Policy. Information collected will not be disclosed to third parties without consent, except to meet any legal and regulatory requirements of the Australian and/or New Zealand government.

Information collected is used for conducting business of the ASUM Research & Grants Board, including administering grant applications, administering human research and animal ethics arrangements, and keeping research teams and other interested parties informed.

ASUM reserves the right to publish the names, photographs and research project titles of award recipients within ASUM publications and at the annual ASUM Conference. Publications and presentations resulting from research supported by an ASUM RGS award are expected to acknowledge ASUM's financial contribution.

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4. Application Process

Refer to Appendix A for the timeline associated with the application process. Exact dates for deadlines are published annually on the ASUM Research Grant Important Dates Page.

4.1 Expression of Interest

Applications must first submit an ASUM Research Grants Expression of Interest (EOI) Form by the closing date for that year's grant opportunity. This EOI allows the Research & Grants Board to gauge the magnitude of interest and determine the appropriate selection of panel members for review of applications.

Submissions must address all areas on the form, including a brief research proposal and a single figure bottom line estimate of funding requested. The EOI does not require sign off by the hosting facility or ethics approval, but consideration of these within the scope of the project are required. The EOI is not binding with respect to personnel, budget, or facilities.

Acknowledgement of receipt by ASUM does not represent confirmation of funding.

If the EOI is assessed as potentially suitable for funding by the ASUM R&G Board, the applicant(s) will be invited to submit a full, detailed application for funding. The full application must be submitted before the indicated closing date for the grant opportunity and submitted in the appropriate format, available from the ASUM website.

4.1.1 Assessment Criteria for Expressions of Interest

- ASUM membership of Chief Investigator for at least 2 years prior to application.
- Relevance of the project to clinical medical ultrasound.
- Uniqueness/novelty of project.
- Methodological validity and feasibility.
- Meets all eligibility requirements.

4.2 Full Application

EOI applications considered potentially suitable for funding will be invited to submit a full application following the specified guidelines and requirements. Full applications with all signatures and ethical approvals are required to be submitted by the advertised deadline. The funding application is binding with respect to personnel, budget, facilities.

Acknowledgement of receipt by ASUM does not represent confirmation of funding.

The development of quality applications through mentoring/peer review prior to submission is encouraged. Applicants are expected to spend the necessary time to complete all sections of the application (including obtaining all signatures).

Applicants should note that applications are not screened for errors and omissions by ASUM staff or members of the assessment panels. Applications which are not submitted by the advertised deadline, do not observe the various word and page limits or are missing signatures and/or sections may be deemed ineligible and will not be assessed. Unchanged resubmitted applications will be ineligible for assessment.

In order to clarify any issues presented in applications, the panel appointed by the ASUM R&G Board may pose questions concerning the project to the project applicant(s). Applications must provide the chief investigator's email address for questions to be addressed. If the chief investigator is requested to respond to questions, a specified timeframe for response will be provided.

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4.2.1 Assessment Criteria of Full Applications for Funding

- Relevance of the project to medical ultrasound.
- Uniqueness/novelty of project.
- Methodological validity and feasibility, including justifications around sample size, intended data analysis and/or modelling methods, and expected outcomes based on existing theory and knowledge.
- Meets all eligibility requirements.
- Coherence and organisation of project proposal.
- Appropriate ethics approval.

The sponsoring institution's Human Ethics committee must approve all research proposals involving human subjects. Failure to have current approval may lead to a project account number being suspended or not issued until approval is obtained

No human subject research is allowable on a project if Ethics Committee approval has lapsed or has not been obtained.

5. Notification to Applicants

Notification to applicants regarding the assessment outcome of their proposed project will be provided via email by the advertised date.

Post-award administration will be forwarded to successful applicants.

6. Appropriate Risk Management

If a project poses special liabilities, special insurance coverage must be confirmed prior to approval. For projects which involve potential liability risk to the sponsoring institution, it may also be necessary to obtain the approval of the sponsoring institution after discussions with the sponsoring institution's Risk Management Office.

The relevant sponsoring institution resource should be consulted for information on chemical, biological, and fire safety, industrial hygiene, regulatory compliance, and other occupational health concerns. The applicant must be aware of regulatory obligations such as responding to emergencies involving hazardous materials; investigating environmental health concerns; and assessing the efficiency of safety devices and other engineering controls.

7. References

References are to be in American Medical Association (AMA) 11th format.

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8. Version history

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated periodically to ensure relevance and currency.

Version	Date Published	Details
1.0	Mar 2004	First adopted.
2.0	Jun 2009	Updated to new template, updated and streamlined wording for clarity and modernisation, inclusion of expression of interest form, inclusion of full application form, inclusion of timeline for the ASUM RGS.
3.0	Aug 2014	Updated to new template, expression of interest form and full application form separated into individual documents, new notification to applications and risk management clauses, wording modernised.
4.0	Feb 2018	Formatting updates.
5.0	Feb 2022	Formatting updates, updated terms and conditions, updated and streamlined wording for clarity and modernisation, inclusion of reference requirements, inclusion of version history.

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Appendix A

Timeline for expressions of interest and full applications. Exact dates will be published annually on the ASUM Research Grants Important Dates page.

August/September	Expression of interest for research grant funding to be received at ASUM office.
September	ASUM R&G Board registers applications, invites discipline experts and determines merit of expressions of interest.
September	Expressions of interest suitable for funding are invited to submit a full application
October	Full applications to be received by the ASUM office in the required format, with all supporting documents and signatures.
October/November	ASUM R&G Board registers applications, invites discipline experts, and determines merit of applications.
November/December	Short list of recommended projects from R&G Board presented to the ASUM Board of Directors for final selection.
December	Notification of outcome to applicants.
February	Funding made available and research commencement (provided all conditions have been met).
ASUM Conference	Presentation of research findings at the annual ASUM Conference.

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