CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Associate Research Fellowship in Regional and Rural Health

7 April 2017

Western Alliance Academic Health Science Centre and Network is calling for applications from recent graduates who wish to undertake an Associate Research Fellowship in Regional and Rural Health in the western region of Victoria. For information about Western Alliance, see the website at www.westernalliance.org.au.

Background and focus

Developing our human capital is essential to the future of research in western Victoria. In order to accelerate our research performance as a region, concerted and focused action is needed to develop our future leaders. The Associate Research Fellowship in Regional and Rural Health is based on a Partnership in Knowledge Transfer (PKT) model, designed to provide opportunities for early and mid-career health service professionals to build their research portfolios and position themselves for future leadership in the region. The responsibilities and benefits of the PKT model are illustrated in the figure on page 2.

We invite proposals for innovative, collaborative translational research projects to be undertaken in the context of regional/rural health service delivery. Proposals must feature an integrated program involving at least one health care service provider, academic institution/s and a recent graduate (the Associate). The Associate shall be jointly mentored by the two (or more) organisational partners to deliver a research project or program that facilitates the transfer of knowledge (see Definitions on page 5) and the embedding of a new capability within the partner health service/s. PKT funding shall be provided towards the Associate’s annual salary and direct research costs.
**PKT model for knowledge transfer**

**COMMUNITY BENEFITS**
- Increased community engagement
- Improved regional health outcomes
- Reduced mortality rates
- Reduced morbidity rates
- Reduced costs to health care system
- Added value to existing research and data

**HEALTH SERVICE PARTNER**
**Responsibilities:** Employ Clinical Associate. Provide industry and clinical mentorship.
**Benefits:** Accelerated transfer of research knowledge into practice. Focused embedding of a new capability across partner organisation. Quality improvements, Fewer errors, Reduced clinical variance, Adopting best practice, Reduced costs, Up-skilling of staff, Ability to recruit, Happy workforce (job satisfaction). Embedding of quality research cultures and methodologies industry experts. Access to postgraduate recruits, clinical research projects, grants and other collaborations. Potential for publication and increases own competitiveness.

**CLINICAL ASSOCIATE**
**Responsibilities:** Transfer research knowledge into practice. Embed a new capability in the organisation.
**Benefits:** Develop and test new skills. Receive project and career mentoring from academic and industry expert. Gain access to postgraduate employment, clinical research projects, grants and other collaborations. Potential for publication and increases own competitiveness.

**ACADEMIC MENTOR**
**Responsibilities:** Technical support and mentoring of the Clinical Associate.
**Benefits:** Access to data, clinical context, clinical research projects, grants and other collaborations. Increases mentor’s publications and own competitiveness.
Aim of the PKT program
The aim is to support development of collaborative, applied and translational research that will improve health outcomes for people and communities in the western region. We are particularly keen to receive submissions from professionals in medical, nursing and allied health disciplines, but applications from non-clinical Associates will also be considered.

All submissions will be reviewed to assess their potential for innovation and relevance to the vision, mission and principles of Western Alliance. Cash and/or in-kind contributions from the partner organisation/s will be highly regarded.

A total of $200,000 is available to support this first round of the PKT program. We anticipate that three Associate Fellows will be able to be supported in this round.

Information for applicants
The PKT program aims to foster cutting-edge research within the health service context and to support the development of leadership in regional and rural research.

Eligibility
To be eligible for consideration for an Associate Fellowship, you must:

1. Have graduated at Honours, Masters or PhD level within the past 2 years – after 1 April 2015. The research proposal may form the basis of a Masters by Research or PhD program.

2. Submit a proposal for research to be conducted within a health service (e.g. hospital, community health service, general practice) located in the western region of Victoria (see [http://www.westernalliance.org.au/about](http://www.westernalliance.org.au/about) for an outline map of the region). You will need to provide written confirmation of the health service’s partnership in the research project as well as from your academic mentor/s.

Key dates in 2017
- The call for applications closes at 5:00 pm on 5 June 2017.
- Shortlisted applicants may be invited to attend an interview with the selection panel.
- Successful applicants will be notified in August 2017.
- Successful applicants will be invited to present their research proposal/progress at the Annual Symposium.

Conditions of award
The funding body is Western Alliance Health Research Ltd, a registered health promotion charity. The Board of Directors will decide which, if any, applications to approve for funding after considering the recommendations of the review panel and the availability of funds.

In applying for the Associate Research Fellowship, applicants confirm that they will:

1. Ensure the ethical conduct of research under Fellowship.
2. Report regularly on progress made towards agreed milestones.
3. Lodge a final report within three months of the termination of the Fellowship.
4. Inform Western Alliance of all applications submitted to other organisations/ funding bodies for the same project, prior to or during the Fellowship.
5. Acknowledge the support of the Western Alliance in all publications and presentations arising from work carried out under the Fellowship.

By virtue of the signature of the appropriate administrative officer on the application form, institutions confirm that they will ensure:

1. That monies granted by Western Alliance will be administered by the institution only for the purpose designated by Western Alliance and in accordance with any directions given by Western Alliance.
2. That regular financial statements (outlining budget and expenditure against the project) will be provided as agreed by the institution to Western Alliance for each grant funded by Western Alliance.
3. That facilities and infrastructure support will be provided and maintained to allow research under the grant to proceed.

Any grant offered will be conditional upon the relevant institution and the applicant(s) entering into an agreement with the Western Alliance.

Recipients of grants may be asked to present the results of the research funded by Western Alliance at a public symposium, in media or other promotional activities.

**How to submit your application**

*Please read the background information and conditions of award carefully.*

All applications must be lodged online by the closing date. For links to the online grant management system, click [here](#).

**Research proposal and mentoring plan**

Your application should include details of your proposed research, including:

- Research plan
- Mentoring plan
- Research timeline: The research may be undertaken on a full-time basis for 12–18 months, or part-time over 24 months.
- Itemised budget: show salary at Research Fellow Level A or B and step, time fraction and on-costs. Direct research costs (including travel/conference registration) for the Associate Fellow only are to be itemised and capped at $10,000 per annum. Show itemised cash and in-kind contributions already pledged from each partner organisation. Show the amount requested from Western Alliance. Do not include GST.
**More information**

If you have a question about the application process or the fellowship program in general, contact Dr Renée Otmar on telephone 4215 2896 or email reneeotmar@westernalliance.org.au.

**Definitions**

**Applied research**: The use of scientific method to investigate, understand and develop innovative approaches and technologies that solve practical problems in a real-world context.

**Collaborative research**: Research involving cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional or multi-jurisdictional approaches.

**Translational research/knowledge translation**: Research that enables its findings to be applied into clinical practice, policy, administrative decision-marking or further research.