

THE CONQUER CYSTIC FIBROSIS & INSTITUTE FOR RESPIRATORY HEALTH POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME



1. Background

The Institute for Respiratory Health (the Institute) is a collaborative respiratory research organisation. We aim to improve the life of everyone living with a respiratory condition by bringing together world class researchers and dedicated clinicians to investigate, diagnose, treat and prevent respiratory conditions. We conduct and foster innovative basic and clinical research and translate our work into improved treatments for people with respiratory conditions.

The Institute has partnered with Conqueror Cystic Fibrosis to establish an innovative adult cystic fibrosis (CF) research program. Conquer Cystic Fibrosis is a volunteer group of dedicated parents that have children with CF. Along with their friends, they help raise much needed money and awareness each year for CF.

The success of paediatric CF research in guiding improved clinical care has meant that the number of adult CF patients in Western Australia now exceeds the number of paediatric patients. The Conqueror Cystic Fibrosis Committee and the Institute share the common goal of building a partnership to focus funds raised to develop adult CF research in Western Australia. The Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Scholarship Program is a collaborative partnership that will be based at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) WA Adult Cystic Fibrosis Service. This centre of excellence provides the state-wide service for the clinical care of adult CF patients.

The Institute has agreed to play the lead role in coordinating key stakeholders plus contributing its own funding towards this partnership program. The broad outcomes that Conquer Cystic Fibrosis and the Institute aspire to achieve are as follows:

1. Develop and build an Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre of Excellence with an expert team of physicians, allied health professionals and scientists that will deliver translation research outcomes;

2. Lead the drive to establish Western Australia as the nation's premier location for adult cystic fibrosis research and to enable Western Australia to be equipped with expertise to position its adult cystic fibrosis research on the international stage;
3. Develop a model to strive towards long term self-sustainability in part through attracting further grant funding to support adult cystic fibrosis research in Western Australia; and
4. Provide supervisor support to train the next generation of research leaders (e.g. honours students, PhD students, clinical research fellows).

2. Cystic Fibrosis PhD Scholarships

One of the objectives of the Institute is to support excellence in research in all areas of respiratory disease. Another objective is to support the careers of young doctors, scientists, students and others to pursuing research careers in these areas. The Institute is committed to attracting exceptional clinicians, allied health professionals and scientists to undertake research studies with a view of building future research careers focusing on CF.

With this in mind, the Institute and the Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Committee have established postgraduate research scholarships in order to attract these students to the WA programme and to foster careers in CF research. Several scholarships are being offered and we are seeking:

- 1) High quality candidates with a strong interest in adult CF care and in applying high quality research to improve its clinical management;
- 2) Projects that address areas of adult CF care (e.g. allied health) where there is a strong need for high quality data are particularly welcomed;
Proposed projects must be clinically relevant and the results expected to have direct impact on day-to-day adult CF care. Priority will be given to projects that are fully integrated with patient care such that the candidate's participation can enrich clinical service delivery.
- 3) Scholarship students will become members of the Institute, undertake their work within the Institute and participate in the activities of the Institute;
- 4) Projects will lead to publications in high impact journals;
- 5) Candidates are expected to apply for, and be competitive for, other sources of funding e.g. APA and / or NH&MRC PhD Fellowship. Projects that bring partnership funding from other organizations (e.g. joint funding from universities, grant agencies) are especially welcomed as it will release further funds to enhance the Conquer Cystic Fibrosis and Institute for Respiratory Health programme;

- 6) Individuals with interests in CF research but not necessarily with a defined project and / or supervisor are welcome to approach the Institute. In those cases the Advisory Committee responsible for selection of candidates may be able to recommend or enlist appropriate supervisors for suitable candidates who fit the profiles defined above;
- 7) Interested parties (students or potential supervisors) should discuss the clinical feasibility of their proposed project with one or more of the SCGH team members: Dr Siobhain Mulrennan (Director of adult CF services), Sue Morey (CNS for adult CF services) or Prof Y C Gary Lee (Head of Respiratory Services; SCGH & Clinical Director Institute for Respiratory Health) before submitting an application.

2.1 Conquer Cystic Fibrosis and Institute for Respiratory Health Postgraduate Research Programme

The following categories of applications are particularly welcomed. In special circumstances applications outside of these categories will be considered.

- i) Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Advanced Clinical PhD Scholarship**
- ii) Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Allied Health Professional PhD Scholarship**
- iii) Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Research Scientist PhD Scholarship**

- a) PhD scholarship support is available for clinicians and for allied health professionals interested in adult CF care for 3 years to encourage development of an ongoing stream of experienced, qualified and highly skilled physicians and allied health professionals in adult CF care in Western Australia. Applications from research scientists interested in adult CF research with projects fulfilling the aforementioned criteria (especially direct clinical relevance of the work) will also be considered.
- b) The recipients are expected to actively participate in CF clinics and inpatient care as part of their projects, and therefore play an integral role in the SCGH CF team.
- c) It is anticipated that current CF patients and their clinical data and bio-samples will provide an important source for research projects with the aim of making immediate impact on clinical outcomes.
- d) The recipients will gain experience and training to become a specialist in their field on adult CF care and in future capable of leading high quality clinical studies from Western Australia.
- e) Multidisciplinary approaches (e.g. collaboration with paediatric CF, lung transplant centres, and other disciplines of allied health) in research directions are strongly encouraged.

Eligibility for a the Institute PhD Scholarship

3.1 Applicants must:

1. Have completed a Science or Allied Health Degree (or equivalent) with a minimum of 2A Honours (preferably higher) OR a Medical Degree;
2. Candidates awarded a scholarship in receipt of salary support will not be eligible.
3. Applicants receiving the full scholarship via this scheme must undertake the PhD within one of the research Units of the Institute of Respiratory Health and be enrolled at the University of Western Australia. Applicants whose scholarships are jointly funded by this scheme and another institution may be enrolled at another WA Institution.
4. Applicants must submit the official application form and all required documentation before the official deadline.
5. Applicants must, at the time of submission, be a financial member of the Institute for Respiratory Health.

3.2 Top Up Scholarships

Top Up scholarships may be awarded in some circumstances at the discretion of the Institute's Conquer Cystic Fibrosis Advisory Committee.

3.3 Selection

1. Selection will be by open competition. Applications will be assessed by the Institute's Conqueror Cystic Fibrosis Advisory Committee (a Sub-Committee of the Board) which consists of national and international experts on research of CF and/or related areas and an Institute representative. Selection will be made on the basis of academic record, research experience, written research proposals and strategic importance to the Institute. Interviews may be conducted.
2. The Institute for Respiratory Health reserves the right not to award a scholarship.

3.4 Award

1. The Advanced Clinical Scholarships (tax free) is valued from a minimum of \$45,000 p/a and the Allied Health and Scientist Scholarships (tax free) from a minimum of \$35,000 p/a. Further top-up may be considered especially for highly qualified individuals depending on experience and qualifications, at the discretion of the Advisory Committee;

2. The scholarship will be renewed annually (for up to a total of three years) subject to the Scholarship recipient performing satisfactorily based on an annual progress report and a letter of support from the primary supervisor.
3. All successful candidates will receive generous consumable support, desk and lab space (if appropriate), computer access, support to attend conferences and access to all the facilities available to the Institute's staff.

3.5 Conditions of Award

1. A scholarship holder must be enrolled as a full-time candidate for a PhD degree at the University of Western Australia if fully funded by this scheme. Candidates may be enrolled at another WA Institution if the scholarship is funded jointly by this scheme and other institutes /universities.
2. Scholarship holders must undertake their research within the Institute and SCGH Respiratory Department. It is expected that scholarship holders will become active members of the Institute and attend all research meetings and functions of the Institute.
3. A supplementary award / top-up scholarship will not be offered if such an award would contravene the regulations attached to the primary award held by the candidate.
4. Annual renewal of any full scholarship awarded will be subject to the candidate applying for alternative awards to backfill and release funding to support more projects/individuals.
5. Holders of scholarships shall not be under any bond at the conclusion of their studies.
6. All scholarship holders will provide an annual report or at an earlier time point if requested to do so by the Institute.
7. All scholarship holders are to inform the Institute of any issues that may impact on their successful completion of their research program.
8. Continuation of a scholarship is subject to satisfactory academic progress, determined by the Student's supervisor, the Advisory Committee and by the Director

of the Institute, in an annual review of progress at the end of each academic year. An award may be suspended, or terminated, where the following is deemed to have occurred:

- (a) unsatisfactory academic progress;
- (b) the conditions of award have not been met;
- (c) the scholarship holder does not resume full-time study at the conclusion of a period of suspension;
- (d) conduct unbecoming of the Award as judged by the Director of the Institute.

9. Candidates who intend to vary their candidature by way of suspension, conversion to part-time or withdrawing, must inform their supervisor, the Director of the Institute and the Scholarships Office at their University at least two weeks in advance. Failure to provide this notice may result in overpayment of allowances which will be recovered from the student.