**Innovation Acceleration Program - University of Melbourne and Western Health**

**Assessment and Program Guidelines**

# INTRODUCTION

The Innovation Acceleration Program (IAP) is a joint initiative between Western Health and the University of Melbourne established to encourage innovation and inventorship between Western Health clinicians and University research teams. This exciting opportunity links compelling problems and unmet needs from the health sector with world-class research and commercialisation expertise at the University of Melbourne.

**2 VALUE PROPOSITION**

* Researchers will have the opportunity to work on solutions to recognised heath sector problems and receive seed funding to develop their concept.
* Healthcare professionals will gain experience in collaborating on a specific research concept, working closely with an expert research team to help develop a solution to a key problem that they care about
* Both researchers and healthcare professionals will receive focused mentorship and guidance from an experienced team of advisors throughout the program and will develop a level of commercial literacy in areas including pitching, IP management and commercial strategy development.

# OBJECTIVES

* To develop innovative solutions to clinical and health-related unmet needs.
* To foster strong, productive engagement between Western Health and University of Melbourne.
* To encourage research teams to focus on targeted solutions to real-life problems.
* To create a structured program that enables the development of healthcare professional and research teams in the running to receive PoC funding and solve key health sector problems.
* To provide mentorship and commercialisation guidance to healthcare professionals and researchers (especially with respect to pitch development, IP and partnership strategizing).
* To create a pipeline of innovative, validated solutions to important clinical problems that can be translated into clinical practice for impact.

# AWARD

Funding for up to **three projects** will be provided in 2021.

# The award will include:

* Funding $10-100 K per project to be used over 12 months and anticipated to start in November 2021.
* Ongoing mentorship and guidance to develop a validated solution.

# KEY DATES

* 7th July 12pm: **2021 IAP Launch**

**Applications open** for Health Sector unmet needs from WH staff

* 14th July: BD in Residence at WH (Morning Session 9-1pm)
* 21st July: BD in Residence at WH (Afternoon Session 1-5pm)
* 1st Aug, 11:59pm: **Applications close** for Health Sector unmet needs
* 3rd Aug: **Unmet Need Selection** by Assessment Panel #1
* 4th Aug: Applicants are advised of outcomes
* 25th Aug: **Project team formation**: All successful WH applicants are matched with a UoM research team and assigned a mentor
* 24th Nov: **Pitch session** for project teams (WH + UoM) to Assessment Panel #2
* 25th Nov: Successful teams receive notification of the award of funding

# PROCESS

**3:3:3 Process**

* **3 Days**
  + WH applicants will be advised within 3 days of their ‘unmet need’ submission whether they have been selected to participate in the program.

[***How****: All ‘unmet need’ submissions will be reviewed by an assessment panel convened two days after applications close*]

* **3 Weeks**
  + Within 3 weeks, all successful WH applicants will be matched with a UoM research team.

[***How****: BD&I and Program Coordinator will identify UoM research teams with relevant expertise and availability, and will arrange an initial meeting before the 3-week deadline*]

* **3 Months**
  + A pitching event will be held 3 months after the project team formation and successful teams will be notified of the outcome within 24 hours.

**[*How:*** *Project teams will be mentored throughout the 3-month period to develop the requisite skills to conduct initial IP searches, commercial planning and develop a pitch; Pitch templates will be provided that will encourage the inclusion of requisite information to enable a decision to be made by the assessment panel within 24 hours*]

# ASSESSMENT AND KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

The **IAP submission selection** will be governed and assessed by a panel of experts from across WH, UoM and external stakeholders against defined eligibility selection criteria.

# Unmet need submissions will be assessed using the following selection criteria:

# Significance of problem

# Evidence of unmet need (in light of current solutions)

# Likelihood of developing a viable solution (taking into consideration path to market, IP position)

# Pitch Presentations (Applications for PoC funding) will be assessed using the following selection criteria:

# Application/ Value proposition

# The technology has clear commercial application(s).

# The technology has significant technical and/or commercial advantages over existing technologies.

# Commercial interest in the IP (e.g. letter of support, or funds already awarded).

# Addressable market/unmet need

# Large and clearly defined target market.

# No obvious and significant barriers to entry and/or clear solution to address these.

# Sits within existing or potential regulatory frameworks.

# National benefits and potential impacts

# Project has application or societal benefits outside of WH; ideally globally clinical impact.

# Execution plan

# Project team has created a preliminary plan that describes the development and/or commercialisation pathway.

# Team management and capability

# Research is qualified in the space. Team has expertise relevant to deliver next stage of project development and/or commercialisation. If commercial, potential to transition to spin-out business or social enterprise.

# APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

# Applicant must be an employee of WH and willing to assign IP as per the WH policy to the IAP partners (WH and UoM).

# Applicants that only hold an honorary WH appointment are also eligible to apply subject to fulfilling the requirements that apply to WH employees.

# BUDGET ITEMS

Items that directly support the research program which may be funded are:

* Personnel (only when new and external expertise is required)
* Equipment
* Consumables
* Other (e.g. services contracted from other organisations or items that do not fit the above headings)

Funding **may not** be spent on staff salaries (except where new and external expertise is required) or costs not directly related to this application.

# APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications will need to be submitted via Smarty Grants which can be accessed via Apply Now button on IAP webpage.

# ADMINSTRATIVE CONTACT

All enquiries are to be directed to the IAP coordinator at innovation-acceleration-program@unimelb.edu.au

# PROMOTIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Successful applicants should note that in the event of an offer and acceptance of funding, a description of their research will be published. Acknowledgement of IAP support of the project must be included in any publications or presentations.

# REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Successful recipients must provide written progress reports, as agreed at time of accepting funding, demonstrating that contractually agreed funding and research outcomes are progressing as planned.

# OTHER

Any background intellectual property (IP) must be University and/or WH owned. IP derived from proof-of-concept projects will be owned by UoM/WH in accordance with the terms of their respective IP policies and its exploitation will be governed by the WH/UoM Partnership Framework agreement.

Non-UoM/WH personnel should be identified within the ‘unmet need’ application and/or pitch presentation and their role within the project should be defined.

The idea or invention must not be encumbered by any other prior obligations that would preclude UoM/WH from commercialising it (i.e. exclusive license, sponsored research agreement, ongoing collaboration with an industry partner, or consulting agreement).

# CONDITIONS OF AWARD

The Chief Investigator, to be agreed at the time of funding, is responsible for the project, for its concept, the strategic decisions called for in its pursuit and for the communication of the results.

The Chief Investigator must ensure the research is conducted in accordance with University policies, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and human research ethics, animal experimentation ethics, requirements of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, health and safety and intellectual property. No project may proceed unless the appropriate ethical or other required clearances have been obtained.

Funding is for one year only. Projects must be completed, and funds expended within 12 months of project start-date.

Requests for a project extension must be approved by the IAP committee and submitted three months prior to the project end date.

Unless special conditions are set down by the committee, the Chief Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of the funding is broadly in accord with the budget presented in the application and is consistent at all times with the nature and aims of the project and objectives of the Scheme.