



FELLOWSHIPS IN RURAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION – MIDWEST AND MURCHISON REGION - 2008

Purpose of the Fellowships

Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) recognises that primary health care providers (Aboriginal health workers, allied health professionals, nurses, public health staff and medical practitioners) are involved in a range of activities that would benefit from evaluation. However, they often face a number of obstacles, including lack of time to identify and critically assess the relevant literature, develop and implement an evaluation plan, or 'write-up' the results for wider dissemination.

Consultations with local health care providers and services have indicated that for evaluations to be most effective, they should be 'owned' by the entire health team and other stakeholders. However, although the work needs to be done collaboratively, there needs to be passionate individuals who have the time and support to drive the work. To meet this need, CUCRH is offering short fellowships as part of the Department of Health and Ageing Researcher Development Program. Fellows could make a valuable contribution to rural and remote health by assessing the evidence that a proposed clinical or public health practice is effective, identifying gaps in knowledge of what is effective, evaluating the effectiveness of new practices and interventions, or monitoring the up-take of new practices. Fellows may use the opportunity to conduct a small evaluation, develop a proposal for a large evaluation, undertake data collection, or write up results of previous work. Fellows must work closely with members of their health team and other stakeholders and

work with CUCRH to identify training or support needs for their wider network to enable all members to increase their evaluation skills.

What is the Fellowship?

Through a planned program of training and support to networks of PHC providers interested in evaluating priority programs or projects of local significance, we propose to offer up to six 'mini-fellowships' of 6 weeks (F/T) or an equivalent time duration. The fellowship will give holders dedicated time to work on an evaluation of a program or project of local significance. The fellow will be responsible for data collection and analysis and for involving other members of the local evaluation network. Training and support will be delivered to all members of the fellow's health team. The protected research time may be spread over a longer period, to be completed no later than December 31st 2008, to allow for data gathering and training.

The fellowships will contribute to salary costs. It will not cover other benefits such as housing or car allowance. Successful applicants may be awarded up to an additional \$3800 for project related costs e.g. payment for expert advice on specific issues, special computer software, travel, etc. Applicants interested in undertaking a part-time fellowship must describe strategies to ensure they are able to devote the required time. Salary replacement for private practitioners will be negotiated at a rate commensurate with university policy.

A selection panel appointed by CUCRH will make the final decision. CUCRH reserves the right to decide the number of fellowships to be made available in each round.

Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants include: primary health care workers, such as general practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals, health promotion

professionals, Aboriginal health workers, and primary health care managers; graduates of other relevant disciplines, including social and behavioural sciences, and health economics, currently working in primary health care. The fellowship must be undertaken in the Midwest and Murchison region . Applicants should also be supported by their local network of health care providers interested in evaluation of primary health care programs.

Individual projects may evaluate interventions associated with any of the priority areas identified by the Department of Health and Ageing, including:

- Evidence based practice, including the uptake of research in primary care practice;
- Quality of care;
- Models of organisation and delivery of primary health care;
- Integration (horizontal and vertical) – including multidisciplinary practice and alternative linkages;
- Economic issues, particularly optimal use of resources;
- Health inequalities and determinants of health;
- Illness prevention and health promotion;
- Specific population groups including rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and people who are disadvantaged or “hard to reach” due to their health or other social, economic or environmental factors; and
- Current reform areas in primary health care.

How do I apply?

Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals with a staff member from CUCRH. See the CUCRH webpage for details about CUCRH staff (www.cucrh.uwa.edu.au) or contact Jacki Ward jackiw@cucrh.uwa.edu.au 9956 0242.

Applicants are encouraged to make inquiries immediately if they have an interest in a research fellowship. Applicants are also encouraged to apply as soon as possible in 2008.

Applicants must provide background information on the project, describe what will be accomplished during the fellowship, the timeline, and indicate how the project outcomes will be used to improve rural or remote health (see below). Applicants may nominate an academic to serve as a mentor for the project. CUCRH can assist applicants to identify an appropriate mentor. Applications that indicate an employer contribution to extend the period of the fellowship or for project funds are encouraged. Assistance will be provided with the application by negotiation with the coordinator of the program (Jacki Ward).

All applications must include a letter of support from their employer indicating the organisation's support to release the staff member for the fellowship.

A decision regarding an application will be made within four weeks of being received.

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Application Guidelines (Criteria)

Name:
Position:
Employing institution:
Work address:
Preferred mailing address:
Telephone (business hours):
Email:

1. Proposed period for fellowship (fellowships are for a period of six weeks, full time or part-time; to be completed before December 31st 2008).
2. Brief description of the project to be evaluated, including geographic focus and target group and the members of the health team involved in the project
3. Has this project already started?

If yes, explain what has already been done.
4. Provide the aims and objectives or evaluation questions for the project.
5. Describe the evaluation activities that would be undertaken during the fellowship period, including methods, expected outcomes and how those outcomes will be measured. Projects on Aboriginal health issues should also describe links with Aboriginal communities and organisations (2-4 pages).
6. Demonstrate the feasibility of the project by providing a time line, an estimate of additional funding or other resources needed and strategies to obtain them. (Fellowships will only be awarded in cases where the applicant can demonstrate that the resources to complete the project are available.)
7. Demonstrate how the project may be consistent with regional state and national health priorities.

- 8 Demonstrate your capacity to undertake the project, include previous work or experience in research or evaluation.
- 9 Explain how this fellowship will contribute to your professional development and to the building of evaluation skills in your health team.
- 10 Describe which organisations in the region you will work with to conduct this evaluation and the nature of their involvement.

Attach the following additional material:

1. Names of two referees
2. Letter of support of the application from a person in your organization who can authorise your release for the fellowship.
3. Curriculum vitae

Fellowships may be granted under the condition that the project obtains approval by an ethics committee before commencing.

***Applications to be sent to Jacki Ward
Combined University Centre for Rural Health,
PO Box 109, Geraldton WA 6531
jackiw@cucrh.uwa.edu.au***