

Call for Proposals

Dalhousie Medical Education “Living Laboratory” Fund:

Deadline – March 28, 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dalhousie Medical Education Living Lab Research and Scholarship Fund was established to build capacity and accelerate partnerships focused on addressing priority medical education needs and research questions.

The goal of this fund is to:

- Foster high quality medical education research and scholarship
- Enable participation in medical education research and scholarship for those seeking an academic or research-oriented career
- Provide opportunities for individuals and teams to participate in designing, conducting, and reporting on medical education research and scholarship

2. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine can benefit from continued innovation and improvement. The Medical School is a “living laboratory” providing a wealth of unique opportunities for education research and scholarship in a real-world education context.

The Dalhousie Medical Education “Living Laboratory” Fund will promote and support education research and scholarship that relates directly to an important question emerging from Dalhousie Medical School across the UGME-PGME-CPDME education continuum. One or more grants will be awarded, ranging from \$5,000 up to \$10,000.

3. REQUIREMENTS

Grant holders are required to:

- Complete an annual and final report of their study progress
- Attend a minimum of five medical education research roundtable sessions
- Co-facilitate one medical education research roundtable session (this is in addition to the sessions attended)
- Present their study findings at the annual Medical Education Research and Innovation Showcase (MERIS).

4. ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be a Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Faculty member currently involved in medical education research or scholarship.
- Applications may be individual or joint, involving one or more medical departments. Units/researchers/educators across health professions are encouraged to collaborate and build multidisciplinary teams (experienced investigators as well as educators new to the field of medical education research or scholarship).
- Residents, staff researchers (e.g., research associate), and graduate students may apply as Co-Principal Investigator with a faculty member. However, the faculty member would be responsible for monitoring the funding.
- Individuals who currently hold a Living Lab grant (i.e. their final study report is outstanding) are not eligible to receive funding in this competition. They can still serve as a Co-Investigator on proposals submitted by other PIs.
- Individuals can only be PI on one proposal. They may still serve as a Co-Investigator on proposals submitted by other PIs.

5. DURATION

Projects can be a maximum 24 months in duration.

6. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals must be submitted electronically in a single PDF, by email to: AnaBela.Sardinha@dal.ca on or before **March 28, 2024**, before 11:59 pm Atlantic Time. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

- Applications must not exceed 6 pages, (12-point font, single-spacing and standard page margins: 2.54 cm top & bottom, 3.17 cm right & left). This excludes references, letters of support, CVs, and appendices, all of which do not count toward the 6 page limit. **Grant submissions that do not adhere to the submission guidelines will not be considered.**

What to include in your application:

- **Identification:** study title; name, affiliation, and contact information for principal investigator(s); name(s) and affiliation(s) of co-investigator(s)
- **Team members:** Brief description of team member roles and qualifications including how they will contribute to the project.
- **Project abstract (maximum 300 words):** Brief description of the project including an overview of the rationale for the study, objectives, study design, methods, analysis, and anticipated outcomes.
- **Project description, that includes the following:**

- **Rationale and study objectives:** Clearly state a research problem and the significance of addressing this problem. Articulate how this project will advance medical education scholarship within your identified area/domain.
- **Literature review:** What is known and unknown about this topic? Provide a concise review of relevant research literature that situates the research problem/questions being explored or developed in the project within exigent scholarly work. Where possible, indicate relevant concepts or theoretical perspectives guiding the proposed study.
- **Methodology:** Detailed description of the study design, including the process for ethics approval (if applicable). Details on study population, recruitment procedures, data collection approaches, data analysis and other pertinent information. Methods proposed may be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. References to methodological sources are strongly encouraged.
- **Proposed project schedule:** A detailed and realistic timeline for project activities. If ethics approval is required, please include this in your timeline.
- **Knowledge translation plan:** A detailed plan for dissemination of research findings. The publication of research findings is strongly encouraged. However, applicants are encouraged to additionally explore other forms of dissemination strategies (one-page maximum)
- **Budget:** See budget guidelines below (one-page maximum).
- **Reference List** (not included in page count)
- **Relevant appendices:** Examples include research tools (e.g., interview guide, survey instrument), visual aids (i.e. a diagram) (not included in page count)
- **Letter of support:** This letter is to indicate the applicant has the protected time necessary to pursue the proposed research study and other medical education research activities in the future (not included in page count). For Faculty and residents: This letter should be written by the applicant's associate dean or a divisional or departmental chair. For staff researchers (e.g., research associate), and graduate students: This letter should be written by the person the applicant reports to or a thesis/project supervisor.
- **2-page CV for principal investigator** (not included in page count)

7. BUDGET GUIDELINES

Please Include a justification for expenses in table format (see sample below). Applicants are required to provide a brief but robust rationale for each budget item, and if applicable, the estimated hours dedicated to each item.

Grant submissions that do not provide a justification for each budget item or exceed the \$10,000 maximum will not be considered.

Acceptable expenses:

- Meeting/focus group costs
- Salary and benefits for research support/project staff*
- Software purchase or licensing fees**
- Fees paid to research participants

- Honoraria for consultants
- Transcription costs
- Conference registration and travel
- Publication and/or poster costs (e.g., open access fees)
- Editing and translation of manuscripts
- Other costs (where applicable)

Unacceptable expenses:

- Tuition or course fees
- Equipment purchases (e.g., computer hardware) or rentals
- Overhead costs
- Investigators' salaries or co-investigators fees for services rendered

***Important guidelines re: Research assistant support**

- The Offices of UGME, PGME and CPDME each have full-time Evaluation Specialists to support their evaluation and research mission. The respective Evaluation Specialists' time will not be remunerated in these proposals, and it should not be assumed that this individual will automatically be available to help with specific project implementation.
- A letter of support from the Associate Dean in UGME, PGME or CPDME is required to ensure the desired support is available from the relevant Evaluation Specialist. **This letter of support is in addition to the letter of support requested in the submission guidelines.** It is expected that the Associate Dean will consider such things as: existing projects, strategic importance of the project to the mandate of the unit, feasibility of completion within the required time frame and investigator track record in deciding on support. Research support provided internally through your respective Associate Dean can be listed as "in kind" in the budget.
- Where support from the relevant Evaluation Specialist is not available, external research support (e.g., a Research Assistant) will be considered. In these cases, the Evaluation Specialist may be available to assist with design and analysis questions (at their discretion).
- In instances where an Evaluation Specialist is listed as a Co-PI, only the letter of support requested in section 6 is required.

****Important guidelines re: Software purchasing or licensing fees**

Dalhousie university provides faculty, staff, and students with a number of software packages for download. See the following link for more available software: <https://libraries.dal.ca/help/software-downloads.html>

Sample Budget:

Item	Justification for Expense	Estimated Cost	Total
Research Assistant	This individual will work closely with members of the research team and will manage all study administration, including institutional ethics submissions, amendments and/or renewal requests, development and piloting of research instruments, and data management and security. 60 hours	\$25/hour	\$1,500
Transcription	We plan to conduct a total of 20, 60-minute interviews with residents (n=10) and faculty (n=10) across specialties. We will use a professional transcription service to ensure efficient and high-quality transcription work with the necessary data security as part of our institution's research ethics guidelines. This service [insert individual or company doing transcription] charges a rate of \$100.00 for a 60-minute audio file.	\$100/60 min interview audio file	\$2,000
Statistician consultant (Research methods unit)	Prior to beginning data collection, we will consult with a Statistician [insert name] to assist with the development of our questionnaire. Dr. [insert name] is a [insert professional role, department, area of expertise] 3 hours	\$75/hour	\$225
Open Access Fees	We will prioritize publishing in open access and hybrid journals that allow optional open access. (Using Springer Open Access costs as a guide)	\$3,000.00	\$3,000
Total budget			\$6,425

8. AWARD SELECTION

The Peer Review Committee will be comprised of 4 members plus a chair. We will seek representation from individuals across UGME, PGME, CPDME, and distributed sites who can appraise the quality and feasibility of the proposals submitted. The chair will be the Director of Medical Education Research.

The Peer Review Committee will make final decisions regarding successful candidates based upon overall evaluations of the degree to which the criteria are met. There will not be an appeal process. All applicants will receive formative feedback on their grants and rationale for the decision. In making decisions, the Committee will rate the proposals using the Review Criteria outlined below.

Funding **will not be disbursed** until receipt of research ethics approval, if required. No extensions will be granted due to REB delays.

9. REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will assess the clarity and appropriateness of the proposal overall, and with particular attention to the methods section and the rationale/potential significance of the study. **Late applications, those that do not include the necessary information, or those that fail to adhere to the required page count will not be considered.**

1. *Challenge – The aim and importance of the endeavour (40%):*

- originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge is clearly outlined
- expected contribution to Dalhousie medical school and the broader medical education field
- the degree to which the highlighted literature helps situate the scholarly work being pursued
- appropriateness and clarity of the methods/approach

2. *Feasibility – The plan to achieve excellence (40%):*

- probability of effective and timely attainment of the project objectives
- appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs
- quality of knowledge mobilization plans, both internal and external to Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine including effective knowledge dissemination strategies and timelines for the design and conduct of the activity/activities proposed

3. *Capability – Collaboration and the expertise to succeed (20%):*

- experience and expertise of the research team
- ability of the research team to complete the research as described

10. IMPORTANT DATES

- Proposal submission deadline: March 28, 2024
- Funding announcements: May 2024

Please contact Dr. Sarah Burm: Sarah.Burm@dal.ca or Dr. Anna MacLeod: Anna.MacLeod@dal.ca if you have any questions.