

Queen's University Improving Cancer Care (QUICC) Research Grant Reference Document

Applications open Nov 21, 2022 with LOIs due Jan 15, 2023 and Full Applications Feb 28, 2023.

Summary:

QUICC research grant was established to support quality improvement initiatives for cancer care and health services across the southeastern region of Ontario. Funds will help support collaboration among cancer physician specialists, healthcare providers and researchers by promoting continuous improvement projects, related to cancer care quality. Ideally targeted interventions directly enhancing the quality of care will be completed within a 1-2 year timeframe.

Purpose:

1. To improve cancer care including pre-diagnosis, on cancer treatment, toxicity management, survivorship and palliation and align the right provider with the right treatment for the patient at the right time.
2. To improve the equity of care and the access to care for vulnerable/underserved populations.
3. To support cross-disciplinary collaborations to develop optimal outcomes and seamless care for cancer patients across the region.
4. To increase cancer research capacity and intensity at Queen's and affiliated hospitals by supporting projects with potential to lead to external funding and have clinical impact in the southeastern region and beyond.

Eligibility:

- Funds are open to all health care professionals involved in the delivery of health care to cancer patients.
- Applicants must be employed at Queen's or hold a position at KHSC.
- There must be at least 1 faculty-level investigator for each application. It is encouraged to have team members from different divisions, departments, or disciplines at Queen's or KHSC.
- At least one investigator must be a **primary faculty appointee in the Department of Oncology.**

Application Process:

QUICC proposals will be reviewed in a 2-step process.

Step1- LOI: Initially 2 page letters of intent (LOI) expressing an area of concern where potential regional quality improvement work could be initiated. The exact methodology, data sources or team composition does not need to be finalized at this stage. LOIs will be submitted to the QUICC Executive to review and prioritize concepts. Feedback will be given to teams to on suggested methods, data sources, tasks to be supported, project personal needed, team composition and other logistics to consider incorporating into their full application. QI development support will also be available from members of the QUICC Executive to facilitate full applications for teams with strong QI interest, but limited QI experience. In addition, QI educational opportunities/materials will be available to all teams.

Step 2- Full Application: Teams will incorporate the LOI review feedback into a final maximum 5 page proposal to be vetted by the QUICC Executive Committee. Executive

members will independently score each application proposal according to an assessment grid; this will be followed by a common review session.

All team members should be listed at the application stage with appropriate QI methods incorporated and resources requested in budget form. In addition, travel/publication fees requested should be justified by identifying potentially relevant conferences or journals.

If more than 6 Co-investigators are required their names should be added to the application, but the additional roles needed for the project should be justified. CVs of departmental team members are not required, but team members outside the Oncology Department may submitted their CVs in support of their proposal, however this is not required. All CV formats will be accepted with no special requirements.

Review Criteria:

Applications will be prioritized for funding based on the following criteria.

1. Research Question/Objectives
2. Feasibility (timeline, budget, infrastructure, materials, etc.)
3. Impact on
 - Clinical Outcomes
 - Regional Cancer Care
 - Vulnerable/Underserved Populations
 - Access to Care
 - Health Equity
4. Sustainability of Project
5. Advancing the careers of the next generation of cancer researchers:
 - Named trainee investigators (graduate students, residents, fellows) with well-defined roles in the project
6. Interdisciplinary collaboration: Combines expertise across diverse disciplines/departments/divisions in an innovative or unusual manner.
7. Relevance to QUICC Priorities and at least one of the following healthcare quality themes:

A. Safety

B. Efficacy

C. Patient Centeredness

D. Timeliness

E. Efficiency

F. Equity

G. Sustainability

Funding Offered:

- In-kind grant amount of \$40,000 for up to a 2 days/week to support the research project and analytical/methodological infrastructure.
- Some additional \$5000 (publication fees, conference expenses) covered for the investigator.
- QI educational funding of \$1,000 for additional methodical training will be available for each team.

Support Offered:

Support offered through the QUICC is focused principally on making specialized skill sets available to support cancer teams in achieving their care improvement objectives. The main in-kind portion of the funding is provided in the form of personnel support from the pool of specialized professionals at QUICC.

These include but are not limited to the following:

Biostatistician
Clinical Laboratory Technologist
Clinical Research Facilitator
Data Analyst
Data Scientist
Epidemiologist/Methodologist
Project Manager
Research Assistant
Research Associate
QI Mentor

The kind of tasks the QUICC support personnel may provide include but are not limited to the following:

Data Entry
Database Design
Data Extraction
Data Linkages
Data Collection
Collecting/Designing Surveys
Planning Methods
Analyzing Data
Ethics Submission
Minuting/Organizing Meetings
Publication Preparation
Poster/Conference Preparation
Statistical Advice
QI Guidance

Competition:

Applications will be peer-reviewed; 2-3 awards will be granted for the competition.

Applications:

1. Research Team
2. Proposal (2 pages maximum, excluding references) which outline:
 - Background
 - Project Goals
 - Potential Measures
 - Expected Benefits
 - Impact/Strategic Alignment

- Sustainability
- 3. CVs Team Members Outside the Oncology Department
- 4. Budget

QUICC Umbrella Ethics:

Ethics clearance has been requested for routine clinical cancer data extraction for standard of care procedures so that individual ethics for each quality improvement project will not need to be obtained. However, any new interventions or data linkages will still require ethical clearance.

Project Requirements:

- Projects must use resources that are within the current standard of care
- Regional in scope
- Technically and practically feasible
- Amenable to objective evaluation
- Sustainable beyond the project
- Impact at least one healthcare quality domain (safety, efficacy, patient-centeredness, timeliness, efficiency, equity, sustainability).

Projects Excluded:

- Clinical trials
- New treatments
- Translational research