AHTA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

1. AMOUNT OF Scholarship

   A maximum of $15,000.00 will be made available for Research Scholarships per annum.

   The amount of money to be allocated to the Research Fund will vary from year to year and will be at the discretion of the AHTA Management Committee. Allocation of funds will be made as part of each annual budget.

2. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

   This committee is to be elected at each AGM and shall include the following persons;

   - The AHTA President Elect. The President Elect is the chair/co-ordinator of this subcommittee.
   - Three other AHTA members (full Members or Associates) with a background/interest in research.
   - Two experienced researchers/independent reviewers. These two members of the subcommittee will have an extensive research background and be able to provide the committee with specific feedback regarding the feasibility of the project, suitability of the study design and proposed analysis methods for each funding application.

3. GRANTS WILL NOT BE MADE WHEN:

   i) Funds are not available

   ii) Applications are not of a sufficiently high standard

4. REPEAT APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED for the same project, if the applicant has fulfilled all of their obligations from their original grant. Their application will be considered without bias on its own merit vs new grant applications.

5. APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE AHTA Executive Support Manager. Electronic submission is preferred. Applications will then be distributed to the members of the Research and Scholarship subcommittee for evaluation.

6. REFEREES. Contact details of two referees should be included with each application. Referees must be able to verify the applicant/s capacity to complete the research project. Referees should not be supervisors/co-authors.

7. Applications for research funding should be received by **31st July**, to allow the subcommittee adequate time to evaluate applications by the end of the year. Research can then commence at the beginning of the following year.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA. Applications will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria;

   i) The significance of the project to the development of hand therapy evidence.

   ii) Clear rationale and identified need for the project based on a sound understanding and thorough review of previous research.

   iii) Suitability of study design, project methods, outcome measures and proposed analysis, to answer the research question.

iv) Funds requests should be requested directly for activities relating to the research and not be for university course fees (i.e. HECS, HELP, RTS) – if guidance is needed on how to allocate funds, please contact one of the committee members, available via the AHTA website, for advice.

v) Feasibility of project and likelihood of meeting stated objectives within stated timeline.

vi) AHTA Membership consideration - Length of AHTA membership and contribution to the field of Hand Therapy and activities of the AHTA will be taken into consideration

vii) Project applications will be accepted if ethical approval has not yet been obtained. If ethical approval is not successful within a year of the grant being approved, it will be deemed unfeasible and approval will be withdrawn. Please utilise the mentors available on the AHTA website for assistance in ethical approval processes if/as needed.

viii) The vast majority of successful candidates have engaged mentors from the very infancy of their research idea. Please consider a supervisor within your educational institute, in your workplace, or from the volunteers available on the AHTA website. You will find the research journey so much more fulfilling and successful if you engage the support of an experienced researcher when you are at the early ideas phase of your project.

9. OBLIGATIONS OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

(i) **Payment of grants** will be in two instalments. The first instalment will be paid shortly after notification of the success of the application. The second instalment will be provided upon completion of an interim progress report half way through the project timeline. At the completion of the project any unused funds must be returned to the AHTA. Equipment purchased to complete the project may be kept by the successful applicant/organisation.

(ii) **Interim project report.** An interim project report is required at the half way point identified in the submitted timeline. An update on the status of the project is required to determine continuation of funding (*appendix 5f).

(iii) **Dissemination of Findings.** Grant recipients are obligated to disseminate knowledge gained to other members of the AHTA. All research must be either presented at an AHTA conference or written up for publication in a peer reviewed journal /the AHTA newsletter. The recipient of the grant should include a proposal of how he/she will meet this obligation.

(iv) **Acknowledgement of the AHTA.** The AHTA MUST BE acknowledged in all publications and presentations carried out with the assistance of the AHTA Research grant. Proof of acknowledgement must be provided to the AHTA.

(v) **Final Project Report.** On project completion, a final report is required by the AHTA that demonstrates how the findings have been disseminated to AHTA members as well as providing a brief summary of research findings and recommendations for future research (200 words).

10. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR WRITIING OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

In no more than 6 pages write a project outline using the following subsections;

(i) **Background** - Based on a through review of the literature clearly establish;

a. What is the problem?
b. Who suffers with this problem?
c. What are the effects of this problem?
d. What is known about treating this problem?
e. Why don't we know the best way to manage it?

(ii) **Significance** – Establish the significance of your research question based on the findings from the review of the literature

(iii) **Research Aims**- the type of research aims will vary according to the type of research question being asked.

a. INTERVENTION/TREATMENT STUDY - your hypotheses may read as follows;

H_o There is no difference between treatment and control
Or
There is a difference between the new treatment and the usual treatment

b. OBSERVATIONAL STUDY (about relationships/trends)

For example," is there a relationship between family support and return to ADL after brachial plexus" OR "is there a relationship between smoking and rehabilitation of strength in the injured hand"? The hypothesis may read as follows;

H_o There is no relationship between this condition and this characteristic
Or
H_1 There is a relationship between this condition and this characteristic

(iv) **Methods.** The method should outline details of the study design, participants and interventions to be provided.

a. Specify the type of study design;

- Randomised controlled trial
- Randomised trial with two or more treatment groups
- Cross-over treatment study
- Prospective case series
- Prospective case study
- Retrospective case series

b. Recruitment of Participants - how will the patients be identified and approached for the study? Who will provide study information and obtain consent?
c. Allocation – how will participants be identified as eligible and/treatment be assigned?
d. Study Variables –define the independent and outcome variables included in the study. Independent variables are those being examined e.g. the type of treatment being received (new or conventional) or exposure to the situation of interest (e.g. zone 2 flexor tendon repair). Outcome variables are used to measure the effect of intervention/exposure and may include assessment of ROM, strength, function or pain. Detail any assessments that you plan to use and at what time frames. Consider are your assessments appropriate for this condition and will they answer your question? Have they been reported to be accurate and reliable? Are you trained to use them?
e. Treatment – for intervention studies detail what treatment/s will be administered, describe dosage, intensity, duration, by whom. Is training required and has the therapist been trained to administer the treatment in a uniform way?

(v) **Statistical Analysis** – specify how you will record the data and analyse findings. Will the assistance of a professional statistician be required? If your study is a randomised

controlled trial provide the results of your power analysis. Will your projected sample size be adequate for the planned analysis methods?

(vi) **Feasibility** - Are you likely to be able to recruit enough participants to your study in the time frame that you have specified? (base this upon the last year or two and estimate from power analysis)

(vii) **References** – include specific references here not a general bibliography. Make sure your literature search is comprehensive, unbiased and current.