

DOUGLAS STEPHENS PAEDIATRIC SURGERY RESEARCH GRANT and TRAVEL FUND Terms of Reference and Grant Guidelines

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the governance of funds held in the Douglas Stephens Paediatric Surgery Research Grant and Travel Fund (The Fund), administered by the Foundation for Surgery. The Fund was established in 2009 in honour of the late F Douglas Stephens AO, with the contribution of the Stephens Family, to recognise his pioneering passion for surgical research and lasting impact on the global practice of paediatric surgery.

The Fund enables research and travel funds to be made to members of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Paediatric Surgeons (ANZAPS) or Set trainees in RACS Paediatric Surgery. These grants are ordinarily presented on alternate years, when ANZAPS meets at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Congress (RACS ASC). ANZAPS, as the official body representing Paediatric Surgery for the RACS, administers the Fund including the nature of awards, eligibility criteria, selection process and awarding of grants. In addition to supporting research projects, the Fund may also be used to support trainee attendance at international conferences where they are presenting research conducted in Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand, thereby promoting global dissemination of locally led paediatric surgical research.

2. KEYWORDS

Fund management, Foundation for Surgery, ANZAPS

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Management of the Fund

- The Foundation for Surgery will administer the Fund, in line with the usual RACS investment corpus policies and procedures.
- Interest from the Fund, including, when appropriate, drawdown of capital funds, is available for any use as deemed appropriate by ANZAPS.
- ANZAPS, along with potential donors, will contribute to the Fund.

3.2. Accessing the Funds

- Applications to withdraw funds from the Fund must be made from ANZAPS in writing to the RACS Head of Finance and Risk Services and will be reviewed and approved in accordance with delegated authorities.

3.3. Financial Reporting

- A financial report will be provided on a biannual basis and the accounts will be audited as part of the annual accounts audit each year.

3.4. Conditions for Withdrawal

- At least 21 days written notice must be given for the funds withdrawal.
- The withdrawal amount will be limited to the available balance of funds as at the date of request.
- Funds will only be disbursed to ANZAPS, who must advise RACS in writing of the nominated bank account details for remittance of the funds.

4. ELIGIBILITY for Research Grant

- The Chief Investigator of the research proposal must be a financial ANZAPS member.

- Paediatric Surgical Education and Training (SET) Program trainee investigators are eligible to apply, provided a financial ANZAPS member is involved to ensure the research remains paediatric surgically focused.
- Projects must be prospective if clinically orientated, or designed to establish high-quality laboratory and/or animal research. Retrospective chart reviews or systematic reviews/meta-analyses are not eligible.
- Projects must have received all local regulatory approvals (Scientific Advisory Committee, Human or Animal Research Ethics, and Local Clinical Governance) prior to fund release.
- Applicants are not eligible if they have received an ANZAPS grant in the previous funding cycle.
- Previous grant recipients must have completed their funded project and presented it at an ANZAPS meeting; failure to meet this requirement results in ineligibility for future grants.
- Award acceptance must occur in person at the ANZAPS meeting, accompanied by a presentation on the proposed research.

5. CRITERIA for Research Grant

- The grant supports original research in paediatric surgery.
- Preference may be given to applicants who have not previously received an ANZAPS Research Grant if applications are equally ranked.
- Prior publications and completed research are considered indicators of a suitable applicant.
- The ANZAPS Scientific Sub-Committee will review applications and select a suitable project. The decision will then be discussed and ratified by the ANZAPS Executive.
- The value of the grant is up to AUD 20,000. This amount may be revised in future at the discretion of the ANZAPS Executive.

5.1 Conditions of ANZAPS Seed Grants for Research Grant

General

- Grants support research by ANZAPS members in paediatric surgery.
- The salary and position of the Chief Investigator should be reasonably assured for the grant duration.

Payment

- Funds are paid upon request in Australian Dollars, following receipt of a correct tax invoice from the administering institution.

Professional Research Personnel

- Conditions are governed by the host institution or as determined by ANZAPS in specific cases.

Alterations in Program or Budget

- The Chief Investigator must adhere to the approved program and budget.
- Major changes or extended absences must be approved by the ANZAPS Executive.

Reporting Requirements

- Future funding eligibility depends on compliance with reporting obligations.
- Grants are typically awarded for two calendar years.
- A one-time extension may be requested in writing.

Progress and Final Reports

- Annual progress reports and a final report within three months of project completion are required.
- Final reports must include expenditure statements. Unused funds must be returned to ANZAPS.

Publications and Presentations

- ANZAPS must be acknowledged in all outputs: *“This study was supported by a Grant from the Australian and New Zealand Association of Paediatric Surgeons.”*
- A presentation must be made at an ANZAPS meeting.
- It is expected that the findings from the funded research will be published in a peer-reviewed journal, and a hard copy or PDF of the publication should be sent to the ANZAPS Executive Officer.

Patents

- Patent applications require written approval from ANZAPS and the host institution.

Audit

- ANZAPS may conduct random audits via the administering institution’s research office.

Termination

- Grants may be terminated for non-compliance.
- If the Chief Investigator leaves the institution, the grant terminates unless alternative arrangements are approved.
- Unused funds must be returned.

5.2 Procedure for Evaluation of Grant Applications

- Each application is reviewed by two assessors, including a designated spokesperson.
- Expert opinion may be sought.
- Reviewers assess scientific merit, feasibility, originality, methodology, and applicant track record.
- Applications are rated and accompanied by a written report identifying strengths, limitations, and areas needing clarification.

6. CRITERIA for TRAINEE TRAVEL FUND FOR INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION AND PUBLICATION

Purpose

- To support Paediatric Surgery trainees who are presenting original research at an international conference and concurrently submitting a manuscript for publication, thereby fostering global academic engagement and research dissemination.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be current trainees in the Paediatric Surgical Education and Training (SET) Program. All trainees, including those who are part-time or on approved interruption (e.g., parental leave), are eligible to apply, provided they are not on probation or on the Structured Learning Cycle (SLC) process, mandated by the Committee of Paediatric Surgery (CoPS)
- The research must be paediatric surgically focused and involve a financial ANZAPS member as a co-investigator or supervisor.
- The applicant must be the presenting author at the international conference of Paediatric Surgical Societies which have an affiliation with Journal of Pediatric Surgery (JPS) or Journal of Pediatric Urology (JPU); these include, but are not limited to, the Section on Surgery of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons (BAPS), the European Society of Pediatric Urology (ESPU), the American Pediatric Surgical Association (APSA), the Canadian Association of Paediatric Surgeons (CAPS), the Pacific Association of Pediatric Surgeons (PAPS), and the International Pediatric Endosurgery Group (IPEG).
- A manuscript based on the presented research must be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal according to the conference and JPS or JPU guidelines.
- Preference will be given to applicants who have not previously received travel funding from ANZAPS.

Funding Scope

- The travel fund may cover expenses such as airfare, accommodation, registration fees, and per diem costs, up to a maximum amount determined annually by the ANZAPS Executive. Expenses must be reasonable, with airfare limited to economy class and accommodation to standard hotel rates (not luxury or premium options).
- Funding will be provided upon submission of a detailed budget and proof of abstract acceptance and submission of the manuscript.
- Reimbursement will be contingent upon submission of the manuscript and evidence of presentation.
- The current value of the grant is up to AUD 5,000 and cannot exceed this amount, unless revised by the ANZAPS Executive in future cycles.

Conditions

- The ANZAPS contribution must be acknowledged in both the conference presentation and the submitted manuscript.
- A brief report summarising the conference experience and manuscript status must be submitted to the ANZAPS Executive within three months of travel.
- A copy of the submitted manuscript (or proof of submission) must be provided.
- ANZAPS reserves the right to audit the use of travel funds and may request receipts or documentation.