

COOPER HIV/AIDS RESEARCH TRAINING (CHART) PROGRAM

2024 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Background

The [Kirby Institute](#) at UNSW Sydney is a leading global infectious disease research institute, recognised for its excellence in HIV research. The Institute has a long-standing commitment to strengthening HIV research capacity in the Asia-Pacific region. The [CHART Program](#) is an initiative proposed by the late Professor David Cooper, founding Director of the Kirby Institute.

Purpose

The CHART Program aims to inspire and increase the number of skilled and experienced researchers in the Asia-Pacific region and identify ways to address local HIV-related priorities. It will generate country-specific research findings to ensure the best scientific evidence underpins regional HIV-related policy and practice. The program objectives aim to support countries and institutions to (i) conduct operational research in accordance with the country's own priorities, (ii) develop adequate and sustainable operational research capacity in public health programs, and (iii) create an organisational culture of policy and practice that is underpinned by evidence-informed decision making.¹

Description

The CHART Program is an HIV regional research capacity building program. The 'learning by doing' training model includes three intensive skill-based workshops (five days/workshop) conducted at the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney over a 12-month period. Research projects will be undertaken by participants in their home country.

A total of nine participants will be selected via a competitive entry process from a combination of low-, middle- and high-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region (please refer to the CHART Program [web page](#) for a list of eligible countries).

Participants will undertake individual research projects and be provided with hands-on mentoring during the workshops as well as the time in between, up until research manuscripts are submitted for publication.

Eligibility: Health professionals with an interest in HIV-related research who are:

- Involved in HIV-related prevention, care and management, or
- Working within the Ministry of Health at a national or provincial level with responsibility for HIV-related policy development, or
- University academics working in public health or clinical research with involvement in HIV-related research.

The CHART Program is supported by an unconditional education grant from ViiV Healthcare. The Kirby Institute is a global partner of the Structured Operational Research Training Initiative (SORT IT), coordinated by TDR, the Special Programme for Research Training in Tropical Diseases, hosted at the World Health Organisation

CHART Key Dates for 2024

Applications:

- Open 1 December 2023 and close 22 January 2024

Workshop dates:

- Workshop # 1: 5 August – 9 August 2024
- Workshop # 2: 12 August – 16 August 2024
- Workshop # 3: TBC April/May 2025

Course Venue: Kirby Institute, Level 6, Wallace Wurth Building
UNSW Sydney NSW 2052, Australia

Course Costs

All travel-related expenses (return economy airfare, accommodation for the duration of the course, ground transportation in Australia, medical insurance and visas) are covered by the Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney. Participants will be paid a daily allowance while in Australia for meals and incidentals. There are no tuition costs associated with the CHART Program.

Laptop requirements

Please note that participants are required to bring a laptop (Windows compatible with administrator rights) to the course and have:

- (i) an up-to-date patented virus protection software
- (ii) proficiency in file and folder management
- (iii) knowledge of computer organisational structure
- (iv) familiarity with the role and concept of file names and extensions
- (v) an ability to set up a display of relevant file information (file name, extension, size, and date)
- (vi) an understanding of short-cut keys and using these for efficient copying, pasting, searching and replacing file elements
- (vii) an openness to learn new programs. No prior knowledge of statistical software is required.

Essential selection criteria

Applicants must satisfy the following essential selection criteria:

1. Currently working in a national, state or non-government organisation or major health institution and be involved in a HIV-related program.
2. Have a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH) or the equivalent, or a strong recommendation.
3. Fluency in written and spoken English demonstrated through compliance with [UNSW's English language requirements](#).
4. Access to relevant HIV-related public health or clinical data for research purposes.
5. Availability and capacity to meet all course milestones (refer to the [TDR milestones](#))
6. Living and working in one of the listed eligible Asia-Pacific countries (please refer to the CHART [web page](#) for a list of eligible countries).

Applicants must provide the following documentation and written responses (to be uploaded when completing the application form – link below)

1. Supporting evidence demonstrating compliance with [UNSW's English language requirements](#). NOTE –English language tests must have been completed within the last two years.
2. Curriculum Vitae (five page maximum).
3. Contact details of two professional referees.
4. Commitment to attend all three workshops of the CHART Program, return to their program or institution after the course and implement course knowledge at a program level for a minimum of at least 18 months.
5. Letter of Support from the applicant's employer granting the applicant permission to attend all CHART workshops, the time required to undertake the research project (within a 6 to 8 month timeframe) and publish findings in a peer-reviewed journal.
6. Written statement from a local mentor (if available and not essential) describing how the mentor knows the applicant and how the mentor proposes to provide support to complete the course successfully.
7. Written responses will be required for the following (300 word maximum per response)
 - a. The applicant's motivation for undertaking the CHART Program and their expected outcomes;
 - b. Description of an HIV-related problem that has been identified within a given local program (the research will need to be carried out within a 6 to 8 month time frame);
 - c. A proposed HIV-related research question, based on a local problem, suitable for development into a research project.
 - d. Impact of the proposed research.

- e. Description of the data available to answer the proposed research question. Existing administrative data is preferred to prospective studies due to the CHART time-frame. The use of data from another study that has already been collected, but not already analysed or earmarked for analysis by another party, may be considered. The following information should be included:
- Data ownership and permission to access.
 - Requirements for gaining access and permission to use data, local ethics approval requirements.
 - Limitations and completeness of the proposed datasets.
 - Format of data (electronic or hard copy).

Important information – completing your application

- Have all required documents and information ready **BEFORE** you commence your application
- Click the “→” button to work through your application and the “←” button to go back to the previous page. Qualtrics will automatically save your responses whenever you click outside of a question or move to a different page in the application form
- You can return to the application form at any time
- Once you submit the survey you will not be allowed to change your responses.
- The survey will close as per the application deadline (stated below)

All supporting documents must be in MS Word or PDF format.

Failure to submit a fully completed application form with all requested documentation will result in automatic rejection of the application.

Shortlisting applications

Please note

- The Kirby Institute may be contacted via email for points of clarification. Please see the details below.
- Failure to provide all the above requested documentation will result in rejection of the application.
- The CHART Steering Committee will review all applications and select nine successful participants from a mix of low-, middle- and high-income countries. In addition, three reserve participants will be nominated. The decision of the Steering Committee will be final, and no appeals will be entertained.
- Results of the selection process will be communicated via email to all applicants by 1 March 2024.

Questions

If you have questions regarding your application, please contact:

Cherie Bennett

Manager – Cooper HIV/AIDS Research Training Program

Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney

Email: cherie.bennett@kirby.unsw.edu.au

Application Deadline: 17:00 on 22 January 2024 (Australian Eastern Standard Time)

References

- Ramsay A, Harries AD, Zachariah R, Bissell K, Hinderaker SG, Edginton M, et al. The Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative for public health programmes. Public Health Action 2014;4(2):79-84.

Application Form