Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the PalC Research Grant

1. **Who is eligible to apply for the PalC Research Grant?**

   All full time staff of PalC partner institutions i.e. NHG institutions, LKCMedicine and Dover Park Hospice are eligible to apply for the PalC Research Grant as Principal Investigator (PI). Additionally, the application must include at least a staff from each of the other 2 partner institutions other than the one that the PI is employed under as co-investigators (Co-I) or collaborators. All three partner institutions of PalC (i.e. NHG institutions, LKCMedicine, Dover Park Hospice) must be featured in each application.

2. **What type of research will be funded?**

   Research project topics should fall within one of the following themes: end organ diseases, models of care, community palliative care, caregiver needs, ethical issues in end-of-life care and education.

   Strong preference will be given to projects that address palliative care in advanced dementia and end organ diseases and have long-term impact and implications.

   Proposals that are not research-focused will not be considered. This grant will also not support the hiring of additional manpower to deliver a current service, expanding or improving physical facilities in an organisation or quality improvement projects.

3. **What items will be covered by this grant?**

   This grant is designed to fund items used directly for the research project. The three budget categories are:

   - Manpower, such as research fellows or research assistants for the project
   - Equipment, such as information technology specifically needed for the project.
   - Other Operating Expenses, such as photocopying and printing charges.

   The PalC Research grant will not pay for the salaries of PIs, Co-Is or collaborators. It will also not pay for conference fees and costs of travel to and from conferences.

   Please refer to Annex 1 in the PalC Research Grant Application form for the list of fundable and non-fundable items.

4. **What is the grant quantum and amount?**

   The PalC Research grant funds research projects up to a maximum of SGD$50,000 for 2 years.

5. **Is a mentor required?**
   A mentor is required if the applicant is a registrar or resident. It is also advisable for other investigators who are new to research to consult a mentor.

6. **Who can be a mentor and what is the mentor's role?**
   The mentor should have adequate research experience and must have at least held a competitive grant as the PI before. He/She may or may not be a subject expert in the research area of this proposal.

   The mentor must be able to provide guidance to the applicant throughout the duration of the project to ensure its successful implementation. The mentor has to guide the applicant in grant writing, provide advice on study design, statistical analyses, project planning and interpretation of findings. In addition, the mentor has to read, endorse and sign off on the grant application form and on all half-yearly progress and final reports submitted by the grant holder.

7. **What are the review criteria?**
   Each of the study proposal is reviewed based on the following 5 key criteria:

   Significance
   - Significance of the clinical problem and healthcare need examined in the study.
   - Originality and innovativeness of the research proposal in terms of its objectives and concepts.

   Approach/Methods
   - Robustness and clarity of the study design and methodology.
   - Demonstration of an awareness and consideration of alternatives to solve the clinical problem.
   - Clear outline of how the data will be analysed and results interpreted.
   - Reasonableness of the budget applied for.
   -
   Competency of the Principal Investigator (PI) and team
   - The PI should have the experience and training to carry out the proposed research.
   - The roles of co-investigators and collaborators should be clearly defined.
   - The team should be sufficiently competent to undertake the project and bring it to completion.

   Scientific/Clinical and Economic potential
   - The study outcomes should form the basis for future work to be carried out and thus allow the PI to apply for national grants in the future.
   - The research should be able to contribute to maintaining and improving healthcare in the future.

Future funding plan

- There should be consideration for future funding plans and their feasibility.

8. **Do I need to seek IRB approval for the project?**
   Yes, the approval of the grant and disbursement of funds are contingent upon the project receiving approval or exemption from NHG Domain Specific Review Board (NHG DSRB), NTU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or SingHealth Centralised Institutional Review Board (CIRB). It may take up to 6 months to obtain IRB approval.

9. **How will the proposal be evaluated?**
   Study proposals will initially be screened for eligibility and completeness. Incomplete proposals and those that do not fulfil the eligibility criteria of the grant will be rejected at this stage.

   Complete and eligible proposals will undergo a peer review process to assess the quality and/or potential impact of the proposed research. Grant applicants are expected to consider these recommendations carefully.

10. **Who will be on the Peer Review Group?**
    The Peer Review Group will comprise of PalC's joint and adjunct faculty members. At least 2 members from the Peer Review Group will be nominated by the PalC's Centre Director to review each Grant Application. The reviewers need not necessarily be specialists in the grant applicant's research domain.

11. **Will I be required to make a presentation of my proposal in person?**
    If the Grant Application is shortlisted, it may be scheduled for an oral presentation. During the oral presentation, grant applicants may be asked to present their research proposals and their responses to the reviewers' comments to a panel of judges for evaluation.

12. **Can an applicant submit more than one research proposal?**
    Yes.

13. **Can I submit a research proposal that has been rejected by another funding agency previously?**
    If the study fulfils the eligibility criteria and fits the type of research (as stipulated in Question 2) that PalC aims to fund, PIs are advised to take note of the comments given by reviewers from previous submissions and make relevant changes to the proposal based on these comments before submission to PalC.

    Duplicate proposals may also be submitted to any other funding agency, provided that PIs declare that a simultaneous submission has been made.

14. **If my research proposal has been successfully awarded the PalC Research grant, when can I begin my research?**
    The project can begin after the Letter of Award has been issued and the Letter of Undertaking has been signed by the PI and received by PalC Research Office. It must also have been approved by the IRB before commencement.

15. **How often do I need to provide a report on the progress of the project?**
    PIs are expected to provide a progress report every 6 months and a final report within 3 months of completion of the project.

16. **When and how do I claim the expenses incurred for the project?**
    Claims are to be submitted every quarter. All claims should reach PalC within one month after the end of each quarter and be substantiated with supporting documents. Only items that are budgeted for in the approved Grant Application can be claimed. PalC reserves the right not to reimburse claims received after the deadline or when supporting documents are incomplete.

17. **What outcomes do I have to deliver if I am awarded the grant?**
    The expected outcomes should be specified as performance indicators in the relevant section of the grant application form. These could include plans for oral/poster presentations at local or international conferences, publications in peer-reviewed journals, joint projects with other local or international universities or research organisations in the future, and submission to other national funding agencies (e.g. National Research Foundation, National Medical Research Council) for a future grant to further develop the project.

    PIs are required to acknowledge PalC in all publications and presentations and to present their results at workshops, conferences and courses organised by PalC as and when requested.

18. **Who should I contact if I have more questions?**
    You may email research@palc.org.sg if you have any queries related to the PalC Research Grant.