The Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF) Grant Call
Singapore - April 2017

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES
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1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), an institute of the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), is the main institution in Singapore focusing on research related to workforce development and adult learning. It champions research in the key areas of sustaining economic performance through skills, shaping employment and CET decisions, as well as developing innovations through learning technology and pedagogy for informed policies and practices.

1.2 The Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF), a national-level research fund, aims to foster high quality and rigorous applied research in workforce development and lifelong learning to support the SkillsFuture’s key thrusts and national-level policies. It encourages inter-disciplinary research and seeks to strengthen research capabilities, through leveraging both local and international expertise. To be considered for funding through the WDARF, researchers’ proposed projects must be in at least one of the three key research priorities articulated in the document, “Research Focus”.

1.3 The WDARF Grant Call is administered by IAL. The WDARF Grant funds research proposals on a competitive basis across eligible Singapore-based institutions. The research proposals will be reviewed by a technical expert panel and approved by SSG Research Committee.

2. **Key Timeline of the Grant Call**

- **Open Call for Proposals**: 5 April 2017
- **Closing Date for Proposal Submission**: 31 July 2017
- **Expert Review**: August – November 2017
- **Selection and Approval**: December 2017
- **Announcement of Call Results**: January – February 2018
3. Application

3.1 Host Institutions (with the exception of the Autonomous Universities, Polytechnics and ITE) are to complete the ‘Application for Eligibility for Workforce Development Applied Research Fund’ (Form A1).

3.2 Application for each research proposal is to be submitted using the prescribed WDARF Application Form (Form A2). All applications have to be verified by the Host Institutions’ Office of Research (or equivalent) and endorsed by the Director, Office of Research (or equivalent) before it can be considered for evaluation.

3.3 All applications shall be duly completed. Proposals will be rejected for incomplete submissions (e.g. missing documents, missing signatures, sections left blank and so on) and failure to adhere to templates provided (e.g. proposal template, timeline and so on).

3.4 Applicants shall ensure that all information provided in the proposal is complete, accurate and not misleading at the point of submission.

3.5 All applications have to be submitted through the Host Institutions’ Office of Research (or equivalent) to SSG.

3.6 Host Institutions shall send all documents (in both word and pdf version) to research@ial.edu.sg by 6pm (GMT+8) on 31 July 2017. The documents shall comprise of:

a. Application for Eligibility for Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (Form A1), (not required for the Autonomous Universities, Polytechnics and ITE);

b. Summary listing of all research proposals; and

c. All endorsed research proposal applications (Form A2).

3.7 SSG reserves the right to reject late submissions of proposals.
4. **Eligibility**

4.1 The research must be conducted in Singapore, and on Singapore, but comparative studies with other countries are acceptable. Research proposals can cut across the different research thrusts.

4.2 The WDARF Grant Call is open to the following type of institutions in Singapore (also known as the ‘Host Institution’):

a. Institute of Higher Learning (IHLs) such as the Universities, Polytechnics and ITE who have their campuses in Singapore; and

b. Local organisation with research unit such as:
   i. Research Institutes
   ii. Social/industry groups
   iii. Continuous Education and Training (CET) Providers
   iv. Government organisations

4.3 Foreign institutions and researchers may partner Host Institution for the grant call. Foreign researchers may participate as Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator or Collaborator.

4.4 SSG reserves the right to disqualify or reject any project team in the event of the withdrawal of any member from the project team.

4.5 The WDARF Grant allows for joint submission from eligible institutions. However, the disbursement of the grant will be made only to the primary Host Institution.

4.6 The Principal Investigator may submit more than one (1) proposal, but funding a Principal Investigator for more than one (1) proposal at a time will only occur in exceptional circumstances.

4.7 Research proposals already funded by other funding bodies will not be considered under the WDARF Grant. Similar version of part(s) of the research proposal shall not be submitted to other agencies for funding prior to the end of the current grant call process.
Host Institutions

4.8 All Host Institutions have the following responsibilities:

a. Support the grant application and review the application to ensure complete and quality submission;

b. Allow the project to be undertaken by the research team and at its premises;

c. Support the Principal Investigator’s project in terms of providing other support outside of the WDARF, if necessary, to ensure its success. This could include the hosting of foreign researchers; and

d. Provide the resources and infrastructure to effectively carry out operational processes for the administration of any grants received, including the procurement of services, management of funds, asset inventories, collation of project reports, etc.

4.9 By endorsing the grant application(s), the Host Institution is confident that the proposed research team has the necessary competencies and track record to bring about the successful completion of the proposed project.

4.10 For each awarded research project, the Host institutions would be required to enter into a service agreement/contract with SSG for the duration of the research project.

Research Team

4.11 The Principal Investigator must fulfil the following requirements at the point of application:

a. Holds a primary full-time appointment (defined as a minimum commitment of 9 months/year) or an affiliation with an institution (may be local or foreign);

b. Holds an EdD or PhD qualification;

c. Has at least five (5) years of research experience, and having assume the responsibility of a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator for at least one (1) research project;
d. Has managed project grants of the magnitude requested in the application; and

e. Has a track record of leadership ability in leading research projects and providing mentorship to research team, as well as having productive research outcomes.

4.12 The research team can comprise international researchers but must include at least one Singaporean or Singapore Permanent Resident. The researchers or research partnerships would be expected to have a mix of skills including:

a. A strong understanding and appreciation of the broad policy context in the area of workforce development and lifelong learning, and its linkages to the SkillsFuture and workforce development practices and policies;

b. Research and analytical expertise in one or more social, economic or behavioural science disciplines, and the use of multi-disciplinary approaches where appropriate.

5. **Research Timeframe**

5.1 Project duration shall be up to 18 months, and adhere to the approved timeline committed in the proposal.

5.2 Projects longer than 18 months may be funded in phases and subject to approval.

5.3 For research programmes, funding period shall be up to 3 years.

6. **Funding Support**

6.1 Research projects must be costed appropriately and reasonably according to the methodology proposed and overall size of the project. Applicant shall exercise due diligence to ensure that the budget is value for money. Upon in-principle approval for the research proposal, SSG will embark on a budget assessment and phasing exercise before finalising the budget to be supported.
6.2 The fundable components are:

6.2.1 Research Manpower

a. Manpower expenses for personnel engaged for the research project, and can include personnel to conduct research, research management and research administration. Supported costs include the full remuneration package per Host Institution’s Human Resource policy, and shall be prorated based on the personnel’s direct involvement in the project.

b. Funding of research staff under the WDARF must comply with the prevailing and consistently applied Human Resource guidelines of the employing Host Institution.

c. The salary cost of Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator and Collaborator are not funded if they are employed by the Host Institutions. However, if these resources are from partner institutions and there are direct costs to the Host Institutions to engage and collaborate with them, the relevant costs are funded.

6.2.2 Other Operating Expenses

a. Survey administration and logistic costs (e.g. data collection related costs, printing of survey forms, incentives to garner responses);

b. Purchase of survey or administrative datasets;

c. Printing of research reports and materials;

d. Engagement fee of experts such as consultants

e. Travel and Accommodation (e.g. travel cost for experts)

Refer to Annex A on the list of fundable / non-fundable components.

6.3 All items claimed must comply with the Host Institution’s internal procurement process, guidelines and policies.

6.4 Indirect costs in research are those costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a
particular sponsored project, but contribute to the ability of the Host Institution to support research projects, such as providing research space and administering the activities. SSG will support indirect research costs (IRC) at a flat rate of 20% of the total qualifying direct costs of each approved project. Principal Investigator will need to budget for the IRC within the overall project cost. SSG reserves the right to adjust this rate.

7. Evaluation Criteria

7.1 Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sub Area</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance and Impact</td>
<td>Alignment to Research Thrusts</td>
<td>Addresses the broad research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution of Research</td>
<td>Has potential for policy formulation or development of best practices and make a contribution to the area of workforce development and lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Merits</td>
<td>Clarity of Research Topic and Relevant to Research Outcome</td>
<td>Research problem is clearly stated, and research questions are relevant to the problem defined</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship between Conceptual/theoretical Framework and Problem of Study</td>
<td>There is a logical relationship between the problem and the conceptual/theoretical framework (supported by adequate review of literature).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity and Adequacy of Research Method(s)</td>
<td>The methodological approach is appropriate to address the research questions/objectives and is clear and adequate in terms of design, and analytical framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Team and Execution</td>
<td>Manpower and Quality of Research Team</td>
<td>Resource is adequate to meet the timeline and researchers have the relevant expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Reasonable and achievable, with the findings timely produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>The budget is itemized with realistic estimates and is value for money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2 The proposals will be evaluated by an expert panel appointed by SSG. The panel may be informed and supplemented by peer reviews by experts in the specific fields, to make informed evaluation.

7.3 The proposals and inputs from the expert panel will be submitted to SSG Research Committee for selection and approval.

7.4 Principal Investigators will be notified of the results through their Office of Research. The SSG Research Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted without being obliged to give any reason thereof. Appeals will not be entertained.

8. **Intellectual Property Management**

8.1 The ownership of the Intellectual Property (IP) created as a result of the research funded by WDARF is subjected to the prevailing Intellectual Property policies and guidelines of the Host Institution.

8.2 The Host Institution shall pay all costs and legal fees in connection with IP registration and management, where applicable.

8.3 The Host Institution to grant to the Singapore Government and public sector agencies, free of any additional charge, a worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable and non-exclusive licence to use, modify, adapt, publish and reproduce for any purpose whatsoever all IP created from the WDARF for non-commercial, R&D and/or educational purposes.

8.4 The Singapore Government and public sector agencies shall be entitled to grant its contractors sublicenses out of any of its rights.

8.5 The Host Institution may publish at any symposia; national, regional, international professional meetings; or in any journals, dissertation, newspaper or otherwise. All publications shall acknowledge the funding support by SSG by citing the Grant name ‘Workforce Development Applied Research Fund’ and SSG’s official; grant number for the project. It is the Principal Investigator’s and Host Institution’s responsibility to ensure that the protection of any IP is not compromised as a result of the research publication of the research project.
8.6 Except for articles or papers published in scientific, technical or professional journals, the following disclaimer must be included in all publications arising from the funded research: ‘Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SkillsFuture Singapore or the Singapore Government.”

8.7 All publications and any other outputs arising from this grant shall be made known to SSG and a copy to be made available to SSG upon request.

9. Data Sharing Policy

9.1 Subject to restrictions related to research ethics and confidentiality, all anonymised data generated from research funded by WDARF will be made available to user communities (such as other researchers, analysts, policy makers) at the earliest feasible opportunity, which shall be no later than 12 months after the completion of the project or official date of publication, whichever is earlier.

9.2 Applicant shall outline a plan to manage research data to meet the following:

a. Submit final datasets, non-anonymised data, to SSG. SSG may:
   i. Use the data for analysis and published derived statistics;
   ii. Use data for research purpose;
   iii. Share data with its research collaborators or parties commissioned by SSG; and
   iv. Acknowledge the data source if data is used.

b. Manage requests from user communities for data.

10. Research Ethics Policy

10.1 The Host Institution is responsible for establishing a research ethics and enforcing its compliance. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators, their Ethics Review Committee (or Institutional Review Board), and the Host Institutions to protect the rights of study subjects and the confidentiality of data,
and in compliance with the applicable legislation such as the Personal Data Protection Act.

10.2 There shall be an informed consent process. It shall include, where appropriate, information letter on the research project, and consent form to seek permission on sharing of data for wider or future research use to maximise the value of the data, while providing adequate safeguards for the individual, and allowing participants to withdraw from the research at any point should they wish.

10.3 A copy of the ethics approval to be lodged with SSG before commencement of data collection.

10.4 If there is no ethics review committee set up at the Host Institution, the Principal Investigator can submit the ethics application to IAL’s Ethics Committee for ethics clearance.

11. Disbursement of Funds

11.1 Only items specified and approved in the Grant Agreement will be funded by WDARF.

11.2 WDARF Grant is provided on a reimbursement basis. Host institution shall pay for the incurred expenditure for the project first, and subsequently claim for reimbursement from SSG.

11.3 Host Institutions shall use WDARF’s prescribed grant request form to claim for reimbursement. The claims submitted by the Host Institution must be supported by originals or certified true copies of receipts, payment vouchers or invoices by the Chief Finance Officer /Director and External Auditors of the Host Institution.

11.4 Claims may be submitted on a quarterly basis (by the end of January, April, July, October) for expenses incurred for the past three (3) months, on prescribed form together with supporting payment documents.

11.5 As and when directed by SSG, Host Institution will allow an auditor appointed by SSG to carry out an audit of its financial and related processes/procedures pertaining to the utilisation of the grant.
12. Performance Management

12.1 Progress report

a. Principal Investigators are to submit soft copies of the half-yearly progress reports for each project via their respective Office of Research (or equivalent) per the schedule stated in the contract. The progress report shall also include any changes to the projected cashflow and project schedule.

b. These reports may be reviewed by an appointed panel to assess the progress of the project, and the Principal Investigators may be invited to make a presentation of their research progress / findings to SSG’s appointed panel. Principal Investigators may be required to give additional information about the progress of their project if the information submitted is deemed inadequate.

c. Principal Investigators who fail to submit their progress report may be denied any grant disbursement until such progress report is submitted.

d. A template of the progress report will be provided after awarding the research proposals.

12.2 Final report

a. Principal Investigator is to submit soft copies of the final report within one (1) month from the project completion date (the writing of the final report shall be within the approved project timeline).

b. Principal Investigator may be invited to make a presentation on the completed project to SSG/SSG appointed panel to ensure that the project has been completed satisfactorily.

12.3 Yearly Audit Report

a. Principal Investigator may be asked to submit a Yearly Audit Report of the proceeding financial year.
b. The Yearly Audit Report must be prepared by the Host Institution’s internal or external auditors, and certified by the Director of Research or equivalent.

c. The Yearly Audit Report shall confirm that the Host Institution’s requisitions are made in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant, and Guidelines.

12.4 Assessment of research impact

a. Principal Investigator is to provide an assessment of the research impact (as outlined in section 6b of the WDARF application form) 12 months after closure of the project.
### Annex A - List of fundable / non-fundable components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Expenses</th>
<th>Supportable?</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Manpower</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator (PI), Co-Principal Investigator and Collaborators</td>
<td><strong>Not supportable</strong> if they are already employed by the Host Institution. <strong>Supportable</strong> if they are from partner institutions, and there are direct costs to the Host Institution to engage/collaborate with them. The funding for these resources needs to be specifically justified and provided for in the grant application, and approved by SSG.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary cost of research assistants, research associates of supporting research and admin staff.</strong></td>
<td>Yes, but only if deemed necessary to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application, and approved by SSG.</td>
<td>Includes salaries, CPF contributions and fringe benefits including medical, dental, contribution to welfare fund, bonuses, annual leave, staff insurance, etc. Allowed as part of overall compensation to employees provided such costs are incurred under formal established and consistently applied policies of the host institution. The salaries offered to staff shall be reasonable, in line with local market benchmarks and comply with formal established pay scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Expenses</td>
<td>Supportable?</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Examples of such costs are advertisement and recruitment agency cost.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff relocation cost</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Examples of such costs are advertisement and recruitment agency cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff recruitment and related cost</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Examples of such costs are advertisement and recruitment agency cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Assistants / Interns</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Only full-time students who are residents of Singapore and are enrolled in local institutes of higher learning qualify to be supported as a student assistant/intern. Not allowable for students who are recipients of existing awards (or stipends) or students who are not residents of Singapore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts honorarium</td>
<td>Yes, but only if deemed necessary to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.</td>
<td>Only if specifically provided for in the grant proposal and approved by SSG. The Expert must be identified and his/her contribution to the project must be clearly defined and described in the proposal. The Principal Investigator shall verify that the remuneration rates comply with the Host Institution’s standard rates. The budget to be supported will be decided based on the above considerations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Operating Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provided such costs are incurred under formal established and consistently applied policies of the Host Institution. It includes experts coming to Singapore to advise or Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator travelling to consult the experts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Expenses</td>
<td>Supportable?</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Conference</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This includes both internal and external audit fees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books and specialised journals relevant to the research</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment &amp; refreshment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fines and penalties</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods and Services Tax (GST)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Allowed for expenses incurred for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance premiums</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The Host Institution is responsible for the insurance of the equipment, relevant workmen compensation and professional indemnity insurance which are in line with the Host Institution’s risk policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal fees</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local &amp; overseas conferences</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead expenses - rental, utilities, telephone charges, facilities management, etc</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patent application, IP related and commercialisation expenses</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost. Such cost shall be paid by the Host Institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff retreat</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing of final reports and other deliverables</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>For submission to SSG only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Expenses</td>
<td>Supportable?</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>as stipulated in the proposal</td>
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<td>This include:</td>
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<td>• Cost related to survey administration and logistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Purchase of survey or administration database</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Incentives to garner responses (in accordance to Host Institutions policy and practices)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Refreshments for focused group sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey related expenses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Only for expenses directly related to the project. This includes postage, courier and freight charges for bringing in equipment and specialised research consumables and reimbursement for staff transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, postage &amp; courier services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Equipment shall be on rental or subscription basis, unless it can be justified that it is more cost effective to purchase the item(s). Purchase of IT equipment must be in accordance with the IT policy of the Host Institution regardless of source of funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working tools such as IT equipment and software</td>
<td>No, unless deemed necessary and pro-rated to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.</td>
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</table>