# Getting Started in Research at the Rural Clinical School

# Welcome

The University of Queensland Rural Clinical School (UQRCS) is recognised nationally and internationally for delivering high quality, focused interprofessional multi-disciplinary research expanding knowledge in rural health. UQRCS Research Team undertakes and facilitates health-related research in regional, rural and remote communities across its footprint.
It is a high performing rural clinical school - in terms of research impact, outputs, and competitive research grant income.

The research program varies from tackling medical workforce issues in regional areas to clinical trials and health services research. The ongoing studies and those currently in the pipeline are likely to yield substantial outputs that benefit not only those living in rural areas, but also worldwide. In the past five years, UQRCS academics and affiliated academic title holders have published at least 385 peer-reviewed journal articles, mostly, in high impact journals, 88 conference presentations, 49 conference posters, 56 editorials and letters to the editor and 4 major reports.

UQRCS Research Team supports UQRCS staff and students, as well as UQRCS affiliated clinicians and other stakeholders. Guidance can be provided in the design and conduct of original scientific research, linkage into an established project, or assistance for anyone participating in research activities through the Faculty of Medicine or at UQ or with our partnering Hospital and Health Service (HHS).

For any research related queries, please send an email to rcsrc@uq.edu.au. For up to date information about our research group or about this handbook, please refer to the online version at https://rcs.medicine.uq.edu.au/research

Associate Professor Srinivas Kondalsamy-Chennakesavan
Head of Research, Rural Clinical School

# Table of Contents

# Where do I start when I have a Research Idea?

If you have an idea and wish to check its viability as a project, there are a number of things you can do:

1. Talk to your colleagues in your department or unit and explore the idea further. You often need the support of your colleagues and line manager/director to complete a research project

2. If you are affiliated with UQRCS, share your idea with the local librarian or email UQRCS Research Team

3. Attend one of the weekly **Brainwaves** meetings on Wednesdays (1-2 pm) and discuss potential next steps (in person or via Zoom)

4. If your idea has a commercial potential or if you want to work with governmental datasets, please discuss your idea (in confidence) with the Head of Research, UQRCS.

5. Access other UQRCS resources (below)

## Resources available at UQRCS

UQRCS Research group website includes information about key areas of research, proposal guidelines and templates:

• Proposal Guidelines provide a series of questions to enable the student, clinician or researcher to consider aspects related to their research and includes advice on who to contact for help with particular aspects

• The research proposal template assists in determining the feasibility of rudimentary research ideas and provides a structured format in which to present your research idea

Once you have a short protocol for the project and support from your workplace, you may wish to discuss your ideas, research processes and timelines for the project more fully with an experienced researcher. See the section Opportunities to meet the Research Team.

## Support from the Faculty of Medicine

UQRCS is one of the three main schools within the Faculty of Medicine. The Faculty can help with partnership agreements and research collaboration agreements; ethics guidelines; promotion of research expertise; biostatistical support; grant scheme assistance and support for student summer scholarships. Further information is available on their website.

## Support from UQ

UQ can assist in finding relevant funding sources for research; library services; research partnerships; scholarships; managing research grants; infrastructure to store and manage research data; specialised equipment for research; information technology and software services; high performance computing; protecting intellectual property; marketing and commercialisation services and publishing and sharing of research findings. For further information visit UQ Research website.

# Planning for Research

**How long will my project take?**

The following is based on the collective experience of UQRCS research academics working in rural areas.

| Research Activity | Average Time* |
| --- | --- |
| *Developing a Protocol* | |
| Develop a study protocol for a clinical audit for a low and negligible risk (LNR) type study | 40+ hours |
| Develop a study protocol for a clinical trial including detailed literature review, study design, statistical analyses | 200+ hours |
| *Applying for Grants* | |
| Prepare a competitive application seeking funds for medical research to the NHMRC or other relevant funding bodies | 3-6 months |
| Announcement of the funding results by the NHMRC after submission of your application | 4-6 months |
| *Ethics Applications and Reports* | |
| Complete ethics submission for a (LNR) using ERM or HREA system. (*see* ethics *for additional information about ERM and HREA*) | 2+ hours |
| Complete ethics submission for interventional studies including clinical trials using ERM or HREA system. (*see Ethics for additional information about ERM and HREA*) | 5+ hours |
| Develop participant information and consent forms | 2-4 hours |
| Turnaround time for (LNR) studies after submission to ethics committees | 60+ days |
| Turnaround time for interventional studies after submission to ethics committees. (*60 days minimum and plan for another 60 days if significant revisions are requested by the ethics committee*) | 120+ days |
| Complete the Annual/progress report to ethics committee (LNR) | 1-2 hours |
| Complete the Final report to ethics committee (LNR) | 2 hours |
| *Site Specific Approval* | |
| Complete Site-Specific Approval submission (SSA) for research at a HHS site | 5+ hours |
| Average turnaround time for (SSA) after ethics clearance (LNR) | 2-4 weeks |
| Turnaround time for (SSA) after ethics clearance (multi-site studies) | 4-6 months depending on the number of sites |
| *Clinical Trials Preparation* | |
| Setup a web-based electronic case-report forms for clinical trials (that conforms to FDA regulations) | 2-3 months |
| Register a clinical trial protocol with a registry such as clinicaltrials.gov | 1-2 hours |

**TIP**

If you have a deadline to meet, it is **YOUR** deadline. Your request for support will be discussed by the research team and will be placed in a queue. Research team members do have pre-existing commitments and lead research studies of their own. It may be difficult to accommodate urgent requests for help. If you are seeking support for statistical analysis give at least 8 weeks notice of your deadline. Paid research consultancies and contracts take priority.

| *Data Collection, Collection Tools and Data Management* | |
|---|---|
| Audit a typical medical record at a hospital or GP setting | 30-45 minutes |
| Develop a survey questionnaire with 20 questions and set it up in an online survey form | 4-8 hours |
| Develop a data collection tool in a spreadsheet or database depending on the complexity | 2-4 hours |
| Create a new record and data storage/collaborative space within UQRDM | 30 minutes |
| Turnaround time for statistical analyses and reporting for a study | 4 weeks |
| *Collaborative and Student Agreements* | |
| Turnaround time for developing research collaboration agreements (RCA) (between UQ and any HHS in Qld) | 3-6 months |
| Complete medical student IP agreement signed off by UQ (SIPCA) | 4 weeks |
| Getting HDR students to complete IP deed poll (SIPC) | 1 week |
| *Staff Recruitment* | |
| Recruit and employ casual research staff at UQ | 2-4 weeks |
| Recruit and employ contract research staff or an academic at UQ | 8-16 weeks |
| *Manuscript Preparation* | |
| Prepare an abstract (250 words) for presentation at a conference (if you have all the results readily available) | 1-2 hours |
| Prepare a manuscript for submission to peer-reviewed journals | 1-3 months |
| Time for journals to review and decide to publish your submitted manuscript (including revisions) | 3-12 months |
| *Complete Research* | |
| To complete a PhD | 3-4 years full time 6-7 years part time |
| Usual time it takes from conceiving a clinical research idea to publishing the findings in a journal | 1-3 years |

\* Average time for a researcher. Depending on your research experience, this may take longer.

## REMEMBER

If you are planning to use confidential data from any Governmental department, the processes and timelines will be longer. Also, if your research involves genetics, or stem cells and embryos or radiation, special considerations apply and will take longer for ethics clearance and site-specific approvals. Be prepared for significant delays.

# Support for those interested in Research

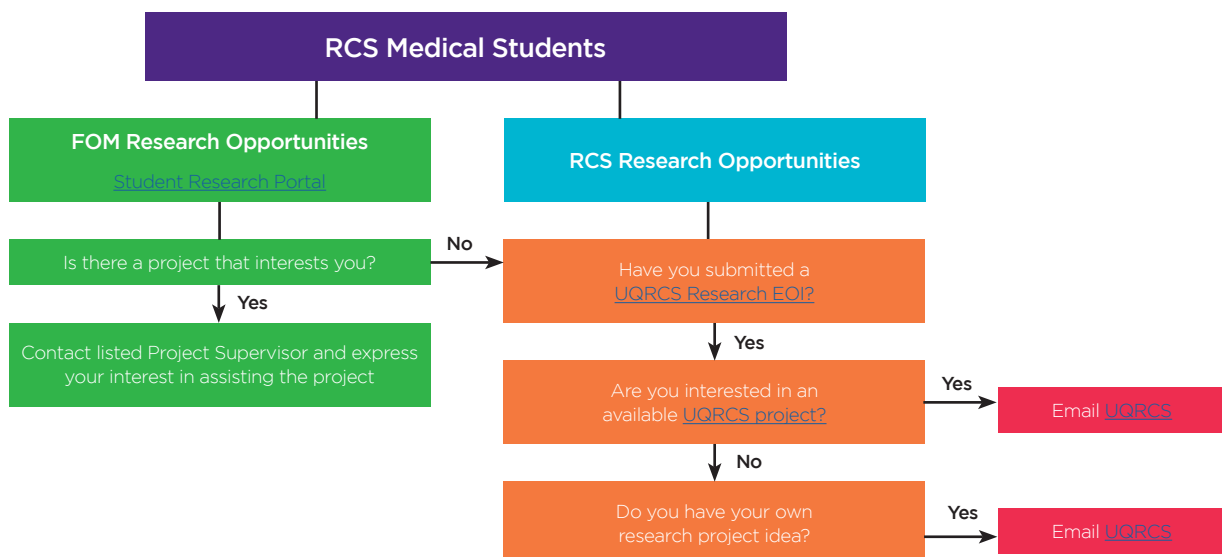## Medical students interested in research

UQRCS Research Group supports UQRCS based students, who are interested in obtaining research experience.. Students interested in Research at UQRCS should complete a Research Expression of Interest Form (EOI). Students are advised at the beginning of the academic year to submit an Research Expression of Interest (EOI). New research project alerts are only sent to students who have submitted a Research (EOI).

The UQRCS cannot guarantee to link students with researchers; if projects are identified, we will inform students of research opportunities.

This type of research experience often has the following characteristics:

• Students volunteer their time in order to gain research experience

• Projects can be with UQRCS researchers or with research-active hospital clinicians

• UQRCS-supported research covers a broad range of clinical and population health projects

• Students often participate in early stages of projects, but participation can be in any part of the research process, depending on project requirements

• Students commit the amount of time they have available.. Greater involvement will increase the likelihood of recognition in research outputs
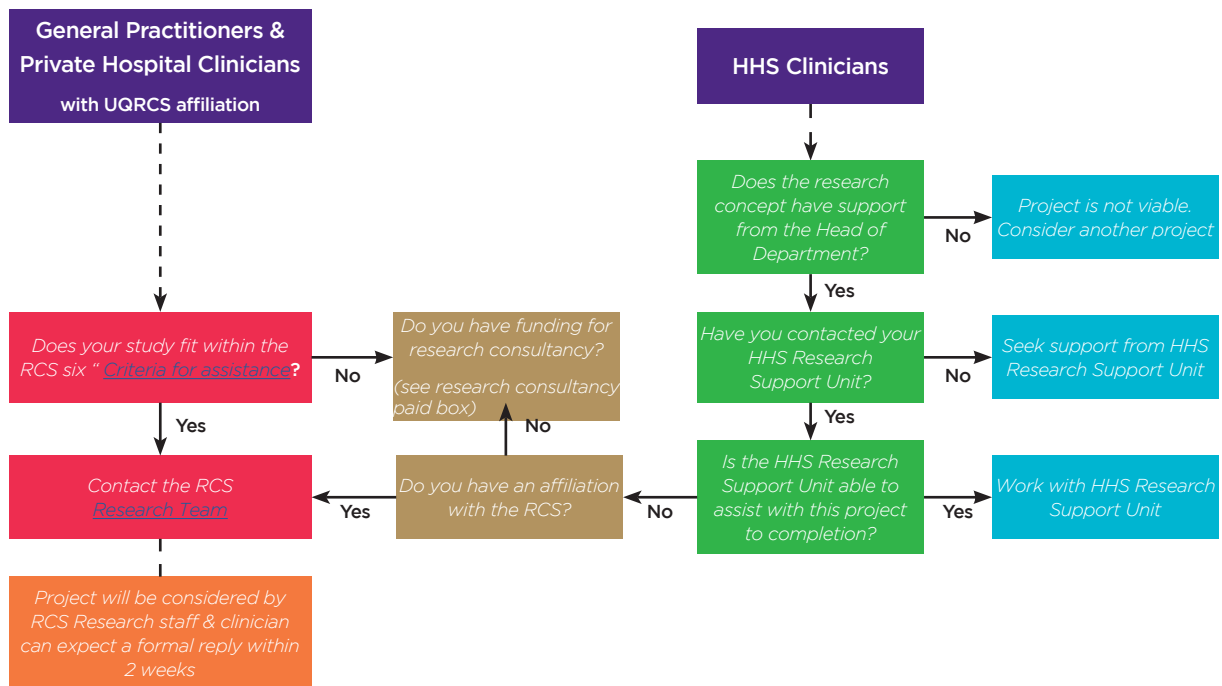
## UQRCS Student Volunteer Research Projects

The Faculty of Medicine Student Research Portal is a comprehensive source of information for students to locate and enquire about available research projects and activities that have been posted by research supervisors across the Faculty. It is also the place to report any student research activity and achievements.

Students with advanced research skills can be supported in pursuing projects that they initiate themselves. For some students, these skills may be better served in the pursuit of a Research Higher Degree (e.g., MPhil, PhD).

## Academic Title

Registered medical professionals including junior doctors, trainees and clinicians can apply for an Academic Title with UQ. It is recommended all applicants review the eligibility guide.

## Academic Title Holder & Clinician Research Projects



### RESEARCH CONSULTANCY (PAID)

The research group at UQRCS has a broad skillset and extensive experience in developing research/ project proposals. In addition the team can undertake project planning and management, evaluation and review within the health industry covering both the public and private sectors. To discuss your requirements (in confidence), please contact the Head of Research, UQRCS.

**Employees of Queensland Government or local HHS**

Please refer to the QLD Government website for relevant research related information if you are employed by Queensland Government or one of the HHSs. The website provides detailed information about funding opportunities, research ethics and governance requirements, and information on intellectual property and commercialisation. Please seek assistance and support from the relevant members of the research support team within your employing organisation. Relevant contact details are below:

**DDHHS**

Research Fellow(s): Dr Anna Tynan
Research Support Officer: Ms Donna Rouse
Ethics and Research Governance Coordinator: Ms Deborah Wainwright
Email: DDHHSResearchSupport@health.qld.gov.au or DDHHS-RESEARCH@health.qld.gov.au

**WBHHS**

Research Governance Officer: Ms Vanessa Ballard
Email: WBHHS-ETR-Research@health.qld.gov.au

**CQHHS**

Research Governance Officer: Dr Kristy Richardson
Email: CQHHShrec@health.qld.gov.au

**Employees of Private Hospital or Doctors in Primary Care settings**

If you are not employed by Queensland Government or one of the HHSs (such as GP registrars, GPs or Specialists in private practice) and are affiliated with the University of Queensland's Rural Clinical School, please contact UQRCS research team

# Student Research

## Complete a PhD/Masters by research

UQRCS supports candidates interested in applying for a higher degree by research (HDR) through UQRCS, either PhD or Masters of Philosophy. A/Prof Matthew McGrail is the first point of contact. For new candidates, this includes:

- Offer advice on whether your topic/idea is a suitable 'fit', or to help develop a suitable topic

- Assist to identify an appropriate supervision team (minimum 2 supervisors required)

- Help assess whether your qualifications and experience meet the entry requirements for a HDR with UQ

- Offer advice (if applicable) to your competitiveness for seeking a scholarship to support being a HDR candidate.

Further information about the HDR application process can be found on the (Higher Degree Research Admissions) site.

## HDR candidates – after enrolment

Undertaking a PhD is expected to take 3.0 – 3.5 years full-time or 6-7 years part-time. HDR candidates with UQRCS are typically part-time and located remotely. Your supervision team will continue to provide key support and monitor progress during your candidature. All candidates are required to meet formal progress requirements through their candidature. More information here:

- HDR student support from the Faculty of Medicine

- Career/skills development support from UQ

# Research Support

## Literature searching

When conducting research, you are required to provide a critical analysis of what has already been written in relation to your particular topic. It is an iterative process which requires skills to not only locate relevant literature, but also the ability to appraise its quality.

## Support from UQRCS

We provide advice and training in literature searching and resource selection. UQ Library have an online how to guide
covering all aspects of literature searching, which you are advised to consult in the first instance.

If you require further assistance please contact UQRCS team to arrange a one-on-one training session or join a group training session.
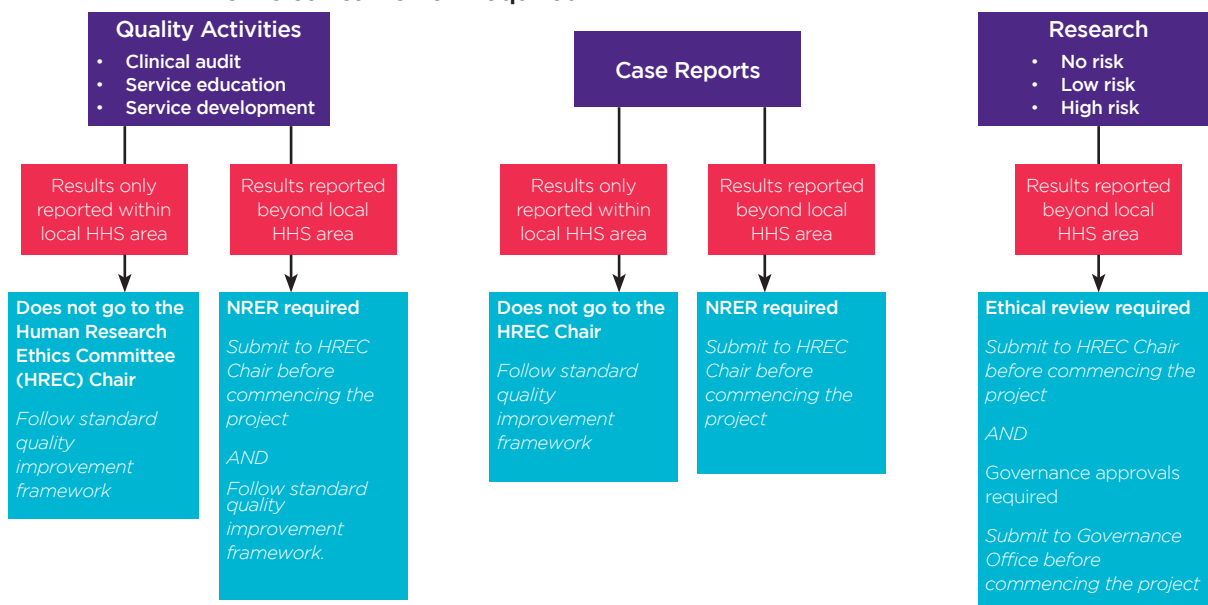
## Support from UQ

UQ also provides support for academic writing and provides some examples of literature reviews.

> **RESEARCH TIP**
>
> All research activities will need to adhere to the The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018).

# Ethics

## When is ethical review required?



*Systematic and Scoping reviews are not required to be submitted to a HREC, however, generally original research should go to your HREC
*Dissemination beyond DDH includes College assignments, presentations at meetings and conferences and publications
*Requirements may vary across HHS. You are advised to confirm with your local HREC
*Adapted from "Tools for quality assurance activities Darling Downs Hospital and Health Services

Individuals, as well as their organisations, are responsible for ensuring research is conducted in an ethical manner. This includes ensuring the necessary ethical clearance has been obtained prior to conducting research.

If you are undertaking research which involves a number of organisations, for example, UQ and a HHS, you will require ethical clearance/approval from each institution. If your research involves a HHS, ethics clearance from the HHS will be required first.

Ethics applications from HHS sites need to be submitted using the online Ethics Review Manager (ERM). Applications submitted to UQ in the first instance should be submitted using the Human Research Ethics Application (HREA). Reciprocal approval from UQ's HREC will be granted if it has received clearance from any of

the registered HRECs in Australia.

### Support from UQRCS

UQRCS Research team provides advice regarding the necessary forms, guidance on the specific information sought by the ethics committee, and processes required for ethical clearance. If you would like more information, see the section Opportunities to meet the Research Team to decide on the most suitable opportunity for a consultation. You will need to meet the criteria for assistance.

### Support from the Faculty of Medicine

The Faculty of Medicine's Research Strategy and Support office provides a number of services, including links to support staff.

### Support from UQ

UQ's Integrity and Compliance provides information about research integrity, human ethics, animal ethics and biosafety; and includes hyperlinks to forms for ethical clearance.

## Data Management

Data integrity is paramount to the usefulness of research, and you need to ensure all aspects of your data management is conducted responsibly. Therefore, it is vital to prepare your data management plan before you start gathering your data. This plan includes considering how you collect, record and interpret research data as well as storing and keeping it secure. You also need to consider how it will be found and used, after you have finished with it, in order for it to continue to have impact.

### Support from UQ

Guidance regarding data management can be found via UQ Library's Services for Researchers page. It is also advisable that you review the information about Data, Materials and Records management which is found via UQ Research Integrity website. UQ Research Data Manager (UQRDM) is a platform to help manage research data.

## Statistics

### UQRCS Support

UQRCS Research Team offers limited statistical support to its direct staff and affiliated clinicians. We encourage interested clinicians to attend local support groups, particularly the regular events in Toowoomba and Rockhampton as detailed in the section Research Support.

Support may include:

• Discussion of research design and sample size, collected variables and data measures for the project

• Assessment of appropriate statistical analyses

• Where appropriate, negotiation regarding undertaking analyses for the clinician and possible co-authorship

### Support from the Faculty of Medicine

The Faculty of Medicine provides a statistical advisory service to:

• Faculty of Medicine Academics

• Academic Title Holders

• Higher Degree Research (HDR) students

• MD students undertaking research within the Faculty of Medicine

To access this service, please complete the online Statistical Support Service Request form. *Note: Charges may apply.*

# Information Technology (IT)

UQ's Information Technology Services (ITS) provides a number of services including Internet access to students, staff and users in the wider UQ community. All the services are linked to your username.

## UQ Username and Password

When you become affiliated with UQRCS, an account is created for you within UQ's IT systems. This account is necessary for you to access UQRCS online systems such as the Library and Learning Management System.

Your staff username typically begins with 'uq' and is followed by the first initial of your given name and the first five letters of your surname. For example: uqjcitiz. Because many staff share the same surnames and first initials, staff usernames can also contain numbers. For example: uqjciti3.

To advise you of your account username and password details, a welcome letter is sent to you via the email address provided on your ATH application or employment paperwork.

If you've forgotten your password and have a mobile phone number linked to your UQ account, you can reset your password. If there is no mobile phone number linked to your account, please contact AskUs in UQ Library (students) or the ITS Service Desk (staff).

**ITS HELP**

Contact the ITS Service Desk Phone: 3365 6000 Email: help@its.uq.edu.au.

Please note that before disclosing any user details, such as usernames, IT staff members are required to verify your identity.

## Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is provided on campus for all students, staff and affiliated clinicians. Instructions can be found online.

## Software

Local IT support is available for software on UQ computers and linking personal devices to printers. Training to use research related software is provided by UQ Library with some sessions available via Zoom.

## Support from UQRCS

UQRCS Librarians provide support and training for EndNote bibliographic management software. If you would like to arrange a face-to-face or zoom session, please see the section Opportunities to meet the Research Team

## Support from UQ

The ITS section of the university provides remote IT support.  UQ also provides a number of software packages to students and academics.  UQ Library is responsible for supporting the use of bibliographic management software, as well as a number of statistical software packages. Training (including online training via zoom), training material and downloads are available online.

# Opportunities to Meet the Research Team

A number of regular meetings, drop in sessions, research forums and showcases are held across UQRCS campuses throughout the year. Students, clinicians, academic title holders and research interested staff are welcome to attend these to discuss research ideas. If you require further information about any of these, please email UQRCS Research Team

| Research Events and Meetings | In person or Zoom |
|---|---|
| Brainwaves<br>These meetings are held every Wednesday between 1 and 2 pm. | Toowoomba Regional Clinical Unit<br>152 West Street, Toowoomba<br><br>https://uqz.zoom.us/j/2216451258 |
| Research Interest Group<br><br>These are held in Rockhampton on 3rd Wednesday between 4 and 5 pm. | Rockhampton Regional Clinical Unit<br>78 Canning Street, Rockhampton<br><br>Contact UQRCS Research Team for meeting dates |
| UQRCS Research Team collaborates with local public and private hospital and health services, universities and primary health networks to promote local research an clinical researchers. These events include: | |
| Toowoomba Research Meet and Greet | Toowoomba Regional Clinical Unit hosts this in February/March |
| *CQHHS, CQU & UQ Research Ready Program | Rockhampton commences in February for 8 weeks. Each session is held between 5-8pm |
| Wide Bay Research Meet and Greet | Bundaberg and Hervey Bay host these in February/March |

*The Rockhampton Research Ready Program is a collaborative program which includes an 8-week workshop series with 3 further  networking events throughout the year*

Invitations and notifications to these events are widely distributed, however if you would like to be kept informed, please email UQRCS Research Team

# The Research Team

**A/Prof Srinivas Kondalsamy-Chennakesavan**

Head of Research

Research Areas: Clinical studies/trials, Predictive analytics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, Public health

**A/Prof Matthew McGrail**

Head, Regional Training Hubs Research

Research Areas: Health workforce studies, Biostatistics, Healthcare access

**Dr Priya Martin**

Senior Research Fellow

Research Areas: Clinical supervision, Interprofessional education, Rural health workforce

**Dr Bushra Nasir**

Research Fellow

Research Areas: Indigenous Health

**Dr Tiana Gurney**

Research Manager

Work/Support Areas: Health Workforce; Generic research support

**Dr Jordan Fox**

Project Officer - Research & Library

Research Areas: Health workforce; Generic research support

**Mrs Janelle McGrail**

Research Coordinator

Work/Support Areas: Ethics and research governance; Finance/travel coordination, Secretary, UQRCS Research Committee

**Ms Kaye Cumming**

Librarian, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay Regional Clinical Units

Work/Support Areas: Medical Student Research Liaison and Support, Literature searches, Support for UQRCS affiliated Clinicians and Academic Title Holders in the Wide Bay area

Contact details:

**Associate Professor Srinivas Kondalsamy-Chennakesavan**

Head of Research, Rural Clinical School

The University of Queensland Rural Clinical School
Boyce Gardens
6 Range Street
Mount Lofty QLD 4350 Australia

E  **rcsrc@uq.edu.au**          W  **rcs.medicine.uq.edu.au/research**