

Position Description

Clinical Research Director – Discovery & Innovation Unit

Classification:	EX02
Business unit/department:	Discovery & Innovation Unit
Work location:	Austin Hospital <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify)
Agreement:	Victorian Public Health Sector (Health and Allied Services, Managers and Administrative Officers) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2021-2025
Employment type:	Fixed-Term Part-Time
Hours per week:	Up to 24 hours per week
Reports to:	Deputy CEO/Chief Operating Officer
Direct reports:	0
Financial management:	Budget: \$0
Date:	September 2025

Position purpose

The Clinical Research Director, Discovery & Innovation Unit, provides strategic clinical leadership to grow and strengthen research at Austin Health, with a focus on clinician-researcher development, research excellence, and fostering a vibrant research culture. The Clinical Research Director advises on clinical research priorities, oversees HREC Chairs for ethical review governance, and leads initiatives such as fellowships and targeted grants.

This role works in partnership with the Director of Operations, Discovery & Innovation Unit who holds the responsibility for the end-to-end delivery of research governance, compliance, ethics, contracts, and reporting functions. Research Operations ensures institutional adherence to legislation, accreditation standards, and funding agreements. The Clinical Research Director provides clinical leadership and advisory input to Research Operations to align operational systems with clinical research needs. The two leadership positions co-operate closely to ensure that Austin Health meets its legal, ethical, and operational obligations while building a strong, sustainable clinical research strategy.

About the Discovery & Innovation Unit

The Discovery & Innovation Unit at Austin Health provides organisational leadership, governance, and operational support for all research activity conducted at the health service.

The Discovery & Innovation Unit ensures that research across the organisation meets the highest standards of ethical conduct, scientific integrity, legal compliance, and accreditation requirements. It oversees research ethics and governance, contracts, research agreements, clinical trials coordination, research integrity, and compliance reporting functions.

Through collaboration with the clinician-researchers, research partners, universities, industry sponsors, and government bodies, the Discovery & Innovation Unit plays a central role in enabling safe, high-quality, and impactful research that advances patient care, clinical practice, and scientific discovery.

The Discovery & Innovation Unit operates within a compliance-driven framework, aligning with national and international standards, including the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework, and applicable legislative requirements.

We are committed to fostering a thriving research culture that supports innovation, engages and protects research participants, and builds research capacity for the future.

Position responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Champion a clinician-researcher culture across Austin Health.
- Identify priority clinical research areas aligned with organisational strategy.
- Develop and implement strategies for research talent acquisition, development, and retention, including leadership of fellowship and grant programs.
- Foster interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research collaborations.

Research Governance and Oversight

- Fulfil the statutory role of Scientific Premises Licence Nominee (SPPL) under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA Act), including oversight of animal research compliance and facilities.
- Provide clinical leadership and oversight of Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC), with HREC Chairs formally reporting to the Clinical Research Director for governance, performance, and support.
- Support the Chair the Austin-Mercy Research Precinct Collaborative Committee, ensuring coordinated strategic alignment between partner organisations.
- Serve as Deputy Chair of the Austin Health HREC, chairing meetings in the absence of the appointed HREC Chair.
- Support the Director of Operations, Discovery & Innovation Unit to ensure all research activity meets compliance, ethical, legislative, and accreditation requirements.
- Advise on research governance policy development and continuous improvement.
- Attend and actively contribute to the Austin Health Research Steering Committee, providing clinical insight into research priorities and strategic alignment.
- Provide written scientific and clinical commentary for all research applications reviewed at Austin Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) meetings.



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- Advise on research governance policy development and continuous improvement

Talent Development and Research Capacity Building

- Lead the development and implementation of clinician-researcher career pathways.
- Oversee institutional support for research fellowships, scholarships, and targeted grant programs.
- Mentor emerging clinician-researchers and support succession planning in research leadership.

Research Strategy and Advocacy

- Collaborate with operational and executive leaders to advocate for research investment, infrastructure, and strategic initiatives.
- Represent Austin Health in key research partnerships and on external committees, such as the Victorian Health Research Directors Forum.
- Contribute to the development and review of the Research Strategy and annual Research Plans.

Key Relationships

- Chief Executive Officer and Deputy CEO/COO
- Director of Operations, Discovery & Innovation Unit
- HREC Chairs
- Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Allied Health Officer
- Department Heads and Clinical Leads
- Research Fellows and Early Career Researchers
- University and Research Institute Partners
- Funding Agencies and Sponsors

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

- **Demonstrated standing as a senior health or medical research leader**, with a track record of institutional and system-level influence. This may include current or former registration as a health practitioner (e.g., AHPRA), senior academic appointment, or equivalent executive leadership in research-intensive organisations.
- **Extensive evidence of** a sustained record of peer-reviewed publications, successful research grant leadership, and translational impact.
- **Extensive and senior-level experience in health and medical research leadership**, with a track record of influencing institutional research strategy, policy, and partnerships at the health service or system level.
- **Demonstrated success in executive or Board-level roles** involving oversight of research governance, compliance, ethics, or health innovation within complex organisations.
- **Proven ability to manage institutional conflicts of interest**, investigator non-compliance, and adverse research events, acting to protect participants, research integrity, and the institution even when challenging.



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- **Demonstrated ability to lead in politically sensitive environments**, making high-stakes decisions in alignment with ethical, legal, and regulatory obligations.
- **Comprehensive understanding of Australian research legislation, policy, and accreditation frameworks**, including the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and the *National Clinical Trials Governance Framework*.
- **Strong strategic acumen with the ability to build and implement clinician-researcher development programs**, fellowships, and targeted research investment aligned with institutional priorities.
- **High-level stakeholder and diplomatic skills**, with a demonstrated ability to influence across executive leadership, Boards, clinical units, universities, and regulators.
- **Track record of strategic leadership**, translating research strategy into operational programs such as talent development, fellowships, research partnerships, and targeted grant initiatives.
- **Exceptional interpersonal and negotiation skills**, with the ability to engage effectively across executive leadership, clinical divisions, research teams, universities, regulators, and external partners.
- **Demonstrated commitment to ethical leadership and to fostering a culture of research excellence, transparency, and compliance** in a public health service context.

Desirable but not essential:

- **Experience leading institutional responses** to research accreditation audits, adverse research events, and serious breaches of research conduct.
- **Experience building sustainable clinician-researcher pipelines**, including through structured fellowship and mentoring programs.
- **Established track record in mentoring clinician-researchers**, supporting structured research career development pathways and succession planning.
- **Experience leading institutional or jurisdictional research governance reviews, accreditation processes, or regulatory responses**, including those related to serious research misconduct or compliance breaches.
- **Previous appointment as a Human Research Ethics Committee member or Chair**, or experience chairing complex research-related committees involving multiple partners or jurisdictions.
- **Successful experience managing research within public hospital systems**, university-hospital collaborations, or medical research institutes, with demonstrated ability to influence executive strategy and funding decisions.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

The successful candidate will be a senior clinician-scientist or biomedical research leader with extensive experience leading research strategy, policy, and governance. They will have held appointments to national research funding panels (e.g. NHMRC), institutional Boards, or high-level research leadership roles within hospitals, universities, or medical research institutes.

While AHPRA registration is not essential, credibility with clinician-researchers and experience navigating complex research compliance environments is critical.



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Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

Other conditions – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).
- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.
- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



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