

Position Description

Principal Advisor – Research Contracts & Partnerships

Classification:	HS7
Business unit/department:	Discovery and Innovation Unit, Austin Health
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
	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.
Employment type:	Fixed-Term Full-Time
Hours per week:	38 This position is not eligible for Accrued Days Off (ADO)
Reports to:	Deputy Director Research Governance and Integrity
Direct reports:	NA
Financial management:	NA
Date:	September 2025

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Austin Health operates, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Position purpose

Enable Austin Health to deliver high-stakes research contracts and meet sponsor obligations in ways that are robust, innovative, and practical. This role requires deep expertise in research contracting and governance, the judgment to operate in grey areas, and the emotional intelligence to work with clinician scientists, MRIs, universities, and industry partners. The Principal Advisor safeguards institutional integrity, reduces risk, and designs solutions that get research moving – leveraging Austin Health’s Research Architect platform to embed sponsor responsibilities and provide transparency across the contract lifecycle.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The Discovery and Innovation Unit (DIU) at Austin Health is the central hub for research governance, ethics, and innovation. DIU supports researchers across the precinct by providing expert guidance, systems, and oversight to ensure compliance with national standards and ethical frameworks. It fosters a culture of translational research, enabling collaboration with university and industry partners to deliver impactful health outcomes.

Position responsibilities

1. Sponsor Governance Systems

- Sponsor obligations (oversight, reporting, compliance) are met 100% of the time.
- Tools and workflows are implemented through Research Architect that reduce contract turnaround times and support accreditation standards.

2. Contract Triage & Negotiation

- All incoming contracts triaged within three business days of receipt.
- Lead negotiations with sponsors, CROs, and collaborators, achieving agreements that align with Austin Health's strategic, legal, and financial requirements.
- At least 80% of disputes resolved without executive escalation, protecting relationships while safeguarding Austin Health.

3. Stakeholder Engagement & Relationship Management

- Build trust with clinician scientists, researchers, and executives; feedback reflects confidence in advice even when outcomes are contested.
- Navigate complex dynamics between hospital, MRIs, and universities with professionalism and political acumen.
- Escalations addressed within two business days with solutions proposed.

4. Innovation & Decision-Making in the Grey

- Propose and implement at least one innovative improvement annually to contracting or sponsor governance systems.
- Identify opportunities to improve Research Architect workflows that reduce manual handling and increase transparency.
- Document reasoning for complex decisions, demonstrating balanced consideration of legal, ethical, reputational, and financial factors.

5. Education & Capability Building

- Deliver a minimum of four training sessions per year on contracts and sponsor obligations, achieving "satisfied" or higher participant feedback.
- Mentor junior staff, with at least two structured mentoring or cross-training sessions annually.

6. Performance Monitoring & Reporting

- Maintain accurate dashboards of contract volumes, turnaround times, and sponsor compliance in Research Architect; update monthly for DIU leadership.
- Identify and address bottlenecks within one reporting cycle.

7. Policy & Process Improvement

- Conduct at least one formal review of contract and sponsor governance policies annually.
- Implement recommendations that demonstrably reduce risk and improve clarity.

8. Sector Representation

- Represent Austin Health at a minimum of two external forums or working groups annually.
- Share key learnings and best practices with DIU leadership.

9. Project Support



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- Contribute to at least one DIU strategic project annually (e.g., benchmarking, gap analysis, accreditation preparation) with deliverables completed on time.

Selection criteria

Essential

- 6+ years in clinical research contracting and negotiation.
- Evidence of innovation – developed or redesigned systems, tools, or processes with measurable impact.
- Demonstrated ability to handle high-pressure stakeholders (clinician scientists, executives, sponsors) with resilience and diplomacy.
- Track record of decision-making in ambiguous or contested situations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills; able to influence and gain agreement without formal authority.
- Knowledge of national and international research governance frameworks and sponsor responsibilities.
- Experience working with contract or governance systems (e.g., Salesforce, Research Architect, or equivalent).

Desirable

- Legal or business qualifications in contract management.
- Experience working across hospital, MRI, and university environments.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

- Postgraduate qualifications in research management, law, public administration, or extensive relevant experience.

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:



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- 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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