ASA special clinical audit grant

Application Form | 2025

Level 2, 93–95 Queen Street,
Melbourne 3000, VIC, Australia

T +61 3 9552 0000
F +61 3 9558 1399

sonographers.org
October 2024

table of contents

Contents

Background

The ASA is offering a special clinical audit grant project with total funding of AU$5,000, made possible through the support of **Marsh Pty Ltd**. This grant is intended to support a clinical audit to be commenced and completed in 2025.

What is a Special Clinical Audit Grant?

This grant is separate from the annual audit grant round and aims to encourage sonographers to conduct clinical audits within their departments. These audits should focus on improving the safety, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of sonography services, aligning with ASA's interests. ASA Accredited Medical Sonographer members are invited to apply for funding to complete projects related to one of the specified topics.

Application Process

Applicants must complete the application form and submit it, along with any attachments, via email to researchandstandards@sonographers.org by 5 pm (AEST) on 15th March 2025. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by 28th March 2025.

Audit topics

1. Impact of sonographer report/ worksheet release to referrer prior to radiologist report

Description of Audit Topic:

The timing of ultrasound examination reports provided by radiologists or other reporting doctors can vary, with delays ranging from the same day to over a week. Sonographer reports, often referred to as worksheets or standardised templates, typically inform the medical radiology report and are usually available immediately after the ultrasound examination.

Improving patient services and outcomes may be possible if sonographer reports are made available to the referrer immediately after the examination, rather than waiting for the radiologist's report. It is crucial to identify any differences between the information in sonographer and radiologist reports, as well as the potential positive or negative impacts on patients related to the timeliness and content of these reports.

Suggestions for what might be audited

- Information provided in sonographer report/worksheet/standardised templates across a range of ultrasound examinations.
- Information provided in radiologist report across a range of ultrasound examinations
- Information which is missing from sonographer report/worksheet compared to radiologist report
- Time at which sonographer report became available/were completed
- Time at which radiologist report became available/were completed

Suggested Standards (quantifiable aspects of patient care that you intend to measure current practice against).

- Identify potential detrimental outcomes to patients due:

- To timeliness of radiology report (and when the sonographer report was not accessible to referrer)
- Missing information in sonographer reports if accessed and acted upon before the radiology report is available.

2. Adequacy of patient access to ultrasound guided MSK injections in rural and remote settings.

Description of Audit Topic

Patients in rural and remote areas often face challenges accessing ultrasound-guided musculoskeletal (MSK) injections due to the limited availability of radiologists. In most imaging departments, radiologists are required to administer these injections. This can lead to extended waiting times for appointments, prolonged periods of pain, or the need to travel long distances for timely care. Additionally, high workloads and competing tasks for radiologists in these settings can further delay patient care and extend appointment times.

This project could also be expanded to address access issues for other ultrasound examinations in rural and remote settings.

Suggestions for Audit

- Appointment waiting times for MSK injections in rural/remote settings.
- Internal department waiting times for radiologists to perform injections after patient preparation by sonographers and/or nurses.

Suggested Standards

- An acceptable appointment waiting time, based on existing guidelines or comparisons to metropolitan centres.
- An acceptable internal waiting time, based on average or real appointment times, advertised appointment times in department patient information, or allocated appointment times.

3. Performance of ultrasound in diagnosing abdominal pathologies in bariatric patients

Description of audit topic

Bariatric patients pose a dilemma in diagnostic imaging due to challenges in obtaining diagnostic outcomes for both ultrasound and other modalities. This project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of ultrasound in diagnosing common abdominal pathologies in bariatric patients compared to other imaging modalities such as computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The goal is to determine whether ultrasound can provide reliable diagnostic information and improve patient outcomes while considering the limitations and risks associated with imaging bariatric patients (those with a body mass index (BMI) above 30).

Suggestions for audit

- Diagnostic accuracy of ultrasound versus CT/MRI: Compare the diagnostic accuracy of ultrasound with that of CT and MRI in identifying common abdominal pathologies in bariatric patients.

- Patient outcomes based on imaging modality used: Assess patient outcomes, including if the clinical question is answered, the timeliness of diagnosis and subsequent treatment, based on the imaging modality used.

Suggested Standards

- Diagnostic Accuracy: Establish a benchmark for the diagnostic accuracy of ultrasound in identifying abdominal pathologies in bariatric patients. This could be compared to the accuracy rates of CT and MRI.
- Timeliness of Diagnosis: Define acceptable timeframes for diagnosing abdominal pathologies using ultrasound compared to CT and MRI. This includes the time from initial imaging to final diagnosis.
- Image Quality and Diagnostic Confidence: Determine acceptable levels of image quality and diagnostic confidence as reported by sonographers and radiologists. This could include specific criteria for anatomy seen with diagnostic confidence
- Safety and Comfort: Establish standards for the safety and comfort of sonographers scanning bariatric examinations, including reporting the number of sonographers who experienced pain or discomfort whilst scanning.

Grant assessment

The grant will be reviewed internally by staff members of ASA. Sonographers external to the ASA office may be co-opted if experience in a particular field is required.
Applications will be assessed based on the criteria outlined below. If applications are not of a high enough standard to offer a grant(s), the panel reserves the right not to offer a grant(s).

	Weighting	Description
Mandatory criteria	Application not eligible if mandatory criteria not met.	• The principal investigator is an ASA Accredited Medical Sonographer member and has experience in clinical audit or has a mentor with clinical audit experience. • The principal investigator is not a previous recipient of an ASA Clinical Audit Grant. • The proposed clinical audit has agreement from the host organisation to support the project and meet any costs of the project not covered by grant funding. • Funding is not requested for items that are currently under consideration for or have been provided for under any other grant application. • The project must be distinguishable from a research project. It should be an evaluation of whether clinical practice or service provision meets standards, and aims to improve services rather than to generate new knowledge.
Project impact	20%	• How the project will improve patient outcomes/ address an area of high need/ improve the safety, quality, efficiency or effectiveness of sonography services. • If the project is applicable to settings outside of the setting where the audit was performed. It is accepted that audit findings may not be transferable to other settings.
Project methodology	40%	• Project design is appropriate to meet projective aims and/or objectives within 12 months.
Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project	40%	• Described budget allows successful completion of project. • Qualifications and skilled personnel to undertake project. • Availability of equipment to undertake the project. • Access to relevant data to meet project objectives. • Feasibility of the project being completed within 12 months.

Overall Value and Risk of the Project	Non-weighted	▪ The suitability of the proposed budget to complete all project activities. ▪ How well the requested budget has been detailed and justified. ▪ The identification of and proposed management of potential project risks.

Conditions of the grant

1. The recipient will agree to undertake at least one of the following; 1) a subject review (includes rationale and findings) at an ASA webinar, 2) submit an abstract for an oral presentation/poster presentation at the ASA2026 Annual International Conference, 3) submit a manuscript to the ASA journal *Sonography*.

2. The recipient will provide an interim progress report within six months after commencing the project.

3. At the conclusion of the grant, the recipient will provide a grant report that includes statements on the methodology of the clinical audit, its findings (and their significance), and budget adherence.

4. All presentations or publications arising from this project must acknowledge the support of **Marsh Pty Ltd** and ASA as a grant funding body.

Payment of the grant

There are two ways to accept a funding offer. Please note the GST implications associated with either option.

1. If the funding is to be held by an institution or organisation on your behalf, you will be required to arrange for them to provide the ASA a Tax Invoice for the amount of the grant + GST.

OR

2. If the funding is to be paid to you as an individual, you will be required to provide an invoice with your ABN and bank account details for payment of the grant. Note: there may be tax implications for you with this option, and you are encouraged to obtain financial advice on this.

Application Form

SECTION A – OVERVIEW	
Chief investigator (applicant):	
Title and salutation:	
ASA member number:	
Host organisation: *Please include a contact name and contact details.*	
Project title:	
Project summary (max. 300 words): *Provide a lay summary of the project. Outline the project impact; how it will improve patient*	

outcomes/address an area of high need/improve the safety, quality, efficiency or effectiveness of sonography services.	
List site(s) at which the project will be conducted:	
Total amount requested $AUD(including GST if applicable): *Total not to exceed AU$5000* *To be detailed at Section D – Budget*	
Project duration: *Up to 12 months*	
Submissions to other fundingsources for this project: *Include planned, submitted or approved applications.* *List the funder, expected date of notificationof success and the amount(s) requested/granted.*	
Has the chief investigator been the recipient of monetary awards/grantsissued by the ASA in the past? *If so, please provide details including theyear of grant/award.*	
If your application is successful, will the funding be held by an institution or other organisation on your behalf? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please indicate the name and address of the institution or organisation. **OR**	
If your application is successful, will the funding be paid to you as an individual? Yes ☐ No ☐ *Note: there may be tax implications for you with this option, and you are encouraged to obtain financial advice on this.*	
Indicate the permissions and/or approvals required to undertake your project. *(where relevant, provide current progress, and expected approval dates)* *Please note: Clinical Audits may be exempt from assessment by an ethical committee. It is advised that ethical assessment requirements are checked prior to undertaking a clinical audit.*	
SECTION B – PROJECT METHODOLOGY	
State the aim(s) or objective(s) of the clinical audit project. *(max 150 words)*	
Describe the problem that the clinical audit addresses. *(max. 200 words)*	
How will patient and staff privacy and confidentiality be protected? *(max. 200 words)*	
Description of the clinical audit *(maximum of 100 words for each sub-section)*	
A. What resources are required for the audit? *(include the staff/time/resources needed for consultations or meetings, data collection, analysis and reporting)*	
B. Where will the clinical audit be performed. Include name of organization and or clinical site(s)	

C. What items or variables will be audited?
D. Define the audit standards and their source. *(the audit standards may be expressed as a percentage of a target, the audit standards may be derived from published literature, international, national or local guidelines, or by agreement from interested parties or local auditing teams)*
E. Who are the key stakeholders in your project, and how will they be involved in the project? For example, key stakeholders may form an advisory group to the project. *(max. 150 words)*
F. Describe your data source (i.e., manual or computer records), and if data collection will be retrospective or prospective
G. Provide an estimation of how long the data collection will take.
H. State your planned sample size (i.e, number of patients or examinations), and provide a justification for it.
I. How will data be analysed? How will you determine if the set standard has been met?
J. How, and to whom will results be disseminated?
K. How will the results of the audit be used to make improvements and/or implement change?

Describe any potential barriers and risk mitigation strategies *(max 200 words). Include any potential delays for outstanding key approvals that are needed for the project.*	
Describe consideration given to scalability and value for money of your project and outcome *(max. 150 words). Scalability refers to how the project or its outcomes can be adapted on a wider scale or used within different contexts.*	
List any relevant references.	

SECTION C – Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project **C1 Principal Investigator: Please attach your CV including qualifications, grants previously received, and relevant publications which both support your application and inform understanding of the project. Please limit your CV to 3 pages.**	
Full name: *Please include title/salutation*	
Position:	
Organisation:	
Contact phone number:	
Email:	
Postal address:	
Principal investigator's contribution to the project. *(Describe the roles that will be undertaken by the principal investigator)*	
C2 Associate Investigators (Up to 5) *At least one mentor must be identified if the applicant does not have experience in clinical audits.* *Attach a limited CV (maximum 3 pages) of all investigators including qualifications, selected grants previously received and*	

publications which support the application and inform understanding of the project.
The grant panel uses this information to assess if investigators have appropriate skills and training to undertake the clinical audit.

Full name and title:		Contact details *(email and phone)*	Position:	Organisation:	Contribution:
a)					
b)					
c)					
d)					
e)					

C3 Budget: Provide here the detail of requested funds. Expenditure must be a direct cost of the project and be incurred for required project audit activities.

For salaries, please specify the salary level, on-costs and FTE allocation.
Applicants are reminded to include GST costs where relevant.
Please note the budget must be expended within one year of provision

Budget item: *e.g. Salary (researchassistant)*	Funding requested ($):	Description and justification for budget item**:** *(< 100 words per item). Please indicate all cash and in-kind contributions.*
TOTAL	$ 0.00	

Details of other contributions related to the project that are not included in this application. Include co-contributions (monetary or in-kind) and other grant funds which are available for equipment and salaries.

Budget item:	Description of budget item**:** *(< 100 words per item).*

Have any of the budget items outlined in C3, been included in an outstanding grant application submitted to another institution.
Applicants should notify the ASA as soon as possible of any successful grant applications which includes any of the budget items requested in this grant under C3.

Declaration

Please attach a letter from the host organisation verifying that:

- they have read and understood the implications of this project to the organisation and they support the project and agree to meet the costs of the project not covered by the grant funding.

Save your form and attachments as a PDF file using the following naming convention:

Your surname ASA clinical audit.pdf

e.g. Smith ASA clinical audit.pdf

and email the form to researchandstandards@sonographers.org

Signature of Applicant (Chief Investigator):

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Checklist for ASA Clinical Audit Grant Applicants

Task	
1. The principal investigator is an ASA Accredited Medical Sonographer member	☐
2. All sections of the Application form are complete	☐
3. You have complied with the document instructions, including any word limits where indicated	☐
4. CVs for all investigators listed in Section C are included	☐
5. A letter from the host organisation is included	☐
6. The Application is signed and dated	☐
7. The Application and attachments are saved as a PDF file using the naming convention	☐

8. The Application and attachments are submitted electronically before the deadline	☐