WDARF Grant Call FAQs

1   What is the Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF)?

The Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF) is a national-level research fund established by the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to encourage inter-disciplinary applied research in the areas of workforce development and lifelong learning. In setting up the research fund, SSG seeks to support evidence-informed policies and best-in-class practices that are underpinned by high quality, reliable and responsive workforce development research.

2   What is SSG's role in the WDARF?

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and develops and supports a quality ecosystem of adult education and training in Singapore. To support SkillsFuture Singapore's key thrusts and national level policies, SSG sets the research agenda and initiates and funds the WDARF grant.

3   What is IAL's role in the WDARF?

IAL administers the WDARF grant on behalf of SSG.

4   What research does the WDARF support?

WDARF supports research that fulfil the criteria below:

-   Focuses on Applied Research:
    WDARF only supports proposals that focus on applied research. Applied research refers to research where solving current / emerging issues in policy or practice is the core focus. It attempts to generate new knowledge to achieve a better understanding of what is taking place in the context of action, connected to a project's aims and objectives. This is a highly practical endeavour, and it is much more than using or creating tools, kits, or apps, and collecting data to prove that a new technology or intervention works.

-   Aligns to at least one Research Theme and addresses at least one Challenge Statement

Challenge Statements:
Challenge Statement #1: Overcoming barriers to participation
> How can we better understand barriers and motivations faced by specific learner groups, i.e. mature workers, non-degree holders, low-wage workers, persons with disabilities in participating in CET? Are there more learner groups facing significant barriers to participation in lifelong learning? How can we better support and encourage/nudge these groups to advance their skills/training development journey through signposting, incentives and government programmes, and/or enhanced education and career guidance or any other

proposed means? What are some inventive ways we can adopt to overcome any barriers to participation in lifelong learning?

Challenge Statement #2: Don't PET the CET

What are the differences in learning and training approach between that for working adults and pre-employment training? What principles of learning and training apply well to working adults but not pre-employment students? Conversely, what pedagogical/andragogical principles can apply well to both demographics? What relevant pedagogical/andragogical approaches are we able to create which focus on honing the learning of working adults?

Challenge Statement #3: Digitalising adult learning

How do we define and measure "good" use of the digital medium for adult learning? What modes – synchronous/asynchronous; hybrid/single-mode; gamified etc. – are most effective under what circumstances? How may we best harness the digital means to strengthen adult learning?

Challenge Statement #4: Every workplace a learning workplace

What companies succeed in building a learning workplace for themselves? How can the rest be helped? What modes of workplace learning (e.g. OJT, WSP) work best under what circumstances? How may we best enhance workplace learning opportunities – formal, informal and non-formal – to make workforce learning a norm for all?

Research Themes:

- Theme A: Developing Effective Adult Learning Pedagogies, Skills Development and Enterprise Engagement Strategies
- Theme B: Facilitating Learning & Career Choices among Adult Learners
- Theme C: Enhancing Employment Outcomes through Adult Learning & Skills Development

For more details, please refer to the WDARF Research Focus.

- Is Original Research

  Proposed research should stand up to scrutiny for its originality, addressing gaps which have not been covered in existing WDARF-approved projects, in addition to remaining distinct from relevant up-to-date published research literature.

  The list and write-ups of existing WDARF-approved projects is available here: https://ial.edu.sg/research/wdarf-grant-call/wdarf-grant-call-results/.

5   Who is eligible for the WDARF?

Researchers from Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) such as the Universities, Polytechnics and ITE who have their campuses in Singapore; and local organisations with research units, are eligible to apply for the WDARF grant. This includes:

- Research Institutes;
- Social industry groups;
- Continuing Education and Training (CET) Providers; and
- Government organisations

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

- Holds a primary full-time appointment (defined as a minimum commitment of at least 9 months per year) or an affiliation with a local institution
- Holds an EdD or PhD qualification;
- Has at least five (5) years of research experience, and has assumed the responsibility of a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator for at least one (1) research project;
- Has managed project grants of the magnitude requested in the application; and
- Has a track record of leadership ability in leading research projects and providing mentorship to research team, as well as having productive research outcomes.

6   Are foreign institutions (outside of Singapore) allowed to apply for the WDARF?

Foreign institutions and researchers may partner a local Host Institution to submit a joint research proposal. Foreign researchers may participate as Principal Investigator, Co- Principal Investigator or Collaborator or be a member of the research team. Research teams may comprise international researchers but must include at least one Singaporean or Singapore Permanent Resident.

7   What components are funded by the WDARF?

Please refer to the WDARF Administrative Guidelines (Annex A) for a list of fundable/non-fundable components. The list is non-exhaustive. For further clarifications, please contact research@ial.edu.sg.

8   What is the allowed duration for completion of WDARF projects?

Project duration is capped at 24 months and will adhere to the approved timeline committed in the proposal. Projects longer than 24 months may be funded on a case-by-case basis and are subject to approval.

9   What is the funding quantum for WDARF grants awarded under competitive grant call?

There is no funding limit. Proposal should 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 project is value for money.

10   How do interested parties apply for the WDARF?

Interested applicants may submit their duly endorsed Expression of Interest (EOI) using the relevant form to research@ial.edu.sg.

11   Can I submit the Expression Of Interest (EOI) after the deadline?

No. Late submissions will not be considered.

12   How long should the research summary in the EOI be?

The research summary is limited to 1200 words. Any write-up beyond 1200 words will be disregarded.

13   My proposal is a re-submission. Do I need to submit an EOI?

Yes, all proposals, both new submissions and re-submissions, require an EOI.

For re-submissions, please clearly highlight and focus on the key changes that have been made to the proposal, and work that has been done since the last submission, in the 'Summary of Research'.

14   For re-submission, can the project title or project team be different from the previously submitted proposal?

Yes. Please highlight this change in the Summary of Research.

15   Who will review the EOI?

The EOI will be reviewed by SSG for its relevance to the grant call research themes and challenge statements; and applicability of the proposed research for policy and practice in the area of skills development and adult learning.

16   What is to be included in Estimated Resources Required within EOI?

An estimated budget amount for each category of Manpower, Equipment and Other Costs with brief justification will suffice. There is no need to provide cost breakdown.

17   Is the estimated resources and budget submitted at EOI fixed?

The budget and other estimated resources are a guideline. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, the budget can be adjusted but it should not deviate too much from the estimated budget in EOI.

18   How are Intellectual Property (IP) rights allocated within the WDARF?

The ownership of IP created as a result of the research funded by WDARF is subject to the prevailing Intellectual Property policies and guidelines of the Host Institution. The Host Institution shall pay all costs and legal fees in connection with IP registration and management, where applicable.

The Host Institution is 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.

The Singapore Government and public sector agencies shall be entitled to grant its contractors sub-licences out of any of its rights.

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 'SkillsFuture Singapore's 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. More details regarding Intellectual Property rights are available in the WDARF Administration Guidelines.

19   How is collected data managed within the WDARF?

All anonymised data generated from the Research will be made available to user communities which include other researchers, analysts and policy makers at the earliest feasible opportunity, which shall be no later than twelve (12) months after the end of the Term or official date of publication, whichever is earlier. More details are available in the WDARF Administration Guidelines.